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Christianity without Judais

# CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT JUDAISM.

# LIST

OF THE

# THEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS

OF THE LATE

## REV. BADEN POWELL, M.A., &c.

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Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature—Articles, "Creation," "Deluge," Lord's Day," "Sabbath." 1843–4.
Life of Blanco White. *Westminster Review*. Dec., 1845.
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The Order of Nature—Third Series of Essays. 1859.
On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity, in the First Edition of *Essays and Reviews*. 1859.
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# CHRISTIANITY

WITHOUT

# JUDAISM:

## A SECOND SERIES OF ESSAYS.

INCLUDING THE SUBSTANCE OF

SERMONS

DELIVERED IN LONDON AND OTHER PLACES.

BY THE REV. BADEN POWELL, M.A.,

F.R.S., F.R.A.S., F.G.S.

LATE SAVILIAN PROFESSOR OF GEOMETRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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*The right of translation is reserved.*

Ἄτοπόν ἐστιν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν λαλεῖν καὶ Ἰουδαΐζειν. Ὁ γὰρ Χριστιανισμὸς οὐκ εἰς Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ἐπίστευσεν ἀλλὰ Ἰουδαϊσμὸς εἰς Χριστιανισμόν, ὡς πᾶσα γλῶσσα πιστεύσασα εἰς Θεὸν συνηχθῇ.

IGNATIUS *ad Magnes.* § X.

"It is inconsistent to speak of Jesus Christ, and at the same time to follow Judaism. For Christianity hath not believed in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity, that those of every tongue, having believed in God, might be united together."

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# PREFACE.

In the Preface to the Second Edition of my Essays entitled "The Unity of Worlds and of Nature" I have led the reader to expect a second series, to include the discussion of some important topics but imperfectly treated in the first. The present Volume is designed *in part* to fulfil that promise; it includes the consideration of a subject of a more *purely theological* kind several times adverted to in the former volume,—and which it seemed advisable to put forth in a separate form,—the relation of Christianity to Judaism. The reference to this subject arose out of certain remarks on the bearing of the results of science on religious belief; a topic which, in its wider extent, will form the subject of a third series of Essays.

With respect to the more limited discussion in the following pages, it includes the substance of two articles in "Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature," 1848, an "Essay on the Law and the Gospel" and "On the Application and Misapplication of Scripture."

Two Sermons bearing the same title as the present volume were printed in 1856 for private circulation; the argument of which has been here more systematically enlarged upon. Of those two discourses I may remark, that the interest they appear to have excited, judging from the demands made on me for copies from all parts of the country, but especially from Scotland, has been a chief inducement to the publication of the present more amplified view of the whole subject.

The whole discussion constitutes the substance of several series of Sermons, which—though holding no position in the Church myself—I have had opportunities of delivering from the pulpits of friends,—formerly in seve-

ral places, but especially, of late, in one of the most frequented churches of the metropolis ;— and I have reason to believe that my representations of the case have extensively called attention to a subject of great and increasing importance, especially at a time when opinions of a very opposite tendency are too commonly prevalent and popular.

In the former Essays I dwelt upon the irreconcilable contradiction between the truths elicited by geology and the Sinaitic cosmogony, recited every week in our churches ;— *necessitating* a modified interpretation of some kind ; and this, taken in connection (as it must be) with the true nature of Christianity, as distinct from Mosaism, becomes, in my opinion, a matter of imperative importance at the present time, to be dwelt upon *from the pulpit* without disguise or compromise.

In bringing these subjects forward on various occasions for many years past, though, from the prevalence of very opposite opinions, I

have encountered much opposition, yet, from recent instances, I feel persuaded that there is now at least a considerable, and, I believe, fast increasing, proportion, both of clergy and laity, who are fully alive to more liberal and enlightened views of these subjects, as bearing on the grand object of a general higher appreciation of the real principles of Christianity, so essential for the stability of the very grounds of religious belief at the present day.

In deference to the representations of several correspondents, I have appended at the end of the volume some remarks (from which I should otherwise have abstained) on a work which has obtained some celebrity,—the late Mr H. Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks,"—the last attempt, it is to be hoped, to revive Bible-geology.

1857.

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ERRATA.

Page 152, line 2 from bottom, *after* James *insert* v.
— " last line, *after* Heb. xii. 5; *insert* 1 Pet.
— 159, last line, *for* apposed *read* opposed.
— 160, line 2 from bottom, *delete the comma after* Enquiries.
— 161, line 2 from bottom, *after* was *insert* a comma.
— 191, line 6 from bottom, *for* Judaicil *read* Judaical.

# ESSAY I.

## INTRODUCTORY

# CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT JUDAISM.

## ESSAY I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

Objects and nature of the discussion.

BEFORE entering on the immediate subject proposed to be discussed in the ensuing essays, it will be desirable to offer a few remarks of a general character, which may lead to a more exact apprehension of their precise nature, design, and object.

The present essays are designed as part of a sequel to the former series, in which some important topics were imperfectly adverted to, but confessedly reserved for more full discussion,—which many may think they need, if only to rescue the remarks there made from objection or misconception.

In the former series, those topics—of a *theological* nature—were, for the most part, rather viewed as

resulting from considerations of a *philosophical* kind, than more directly the subjects of discussion. In the present instance it is proposed to take up some of those questions on their own more peculiar ground, and apart from the considerations before introduced.

The discussions here pursued are of a more purely and exclusively theological nature, and are addressed especially to those who, without entering on wider philosophical views, may be desirous to obtain some detailed explanations of the theological and scriptural points formerly adverted to only in a general way, and which involve the consideration of the real nature and characteristic tendencies of the Christian doctrine, more particularly in reference to its independence of the peculiar principles implied in the system of the Old Testatment. The elucidations here offered, though standing on their own basis, have yet a distinct relation to questions largely discussed in the former series of essays, and which bear on the discrepancies with physical truth found in the representations of the Judaical Scriptures, especially in the instance of the Creation, the Deluge, and the like narratives of a physical kind, referring to the economy of the material world.

Connection with former nquiries.

The force of the objections arising out of such discrepancies was before stated to be obviated chiefly by the argument that *Christianity* is not really implicated in those representations, which are wholly peculiar to the Mosaic religion, with which Christianity has, however, been too commonly mixed up and confounded, not only in popular estimation, but even by many eminent modern theologians, among whom we cannot but notice a very common tendency to lose sight of distinctions between the different portions of the divine dispensations. Thus the argument requires no assumption of any abstruse or disputable kind, but merely supposes granted the general historical authority of the Books of the Old and New Testament, as the *authentic record* of the *religious systems* disclosed in them respectively. It is not a question as to the abstract truth of revelation; nor does it require any minute consideration of critical evidence as to the origin or authority of those writings.

Assumption of the Scripture records.

The discussion lies with that class of readers who already admit the entire authority of the Bible, and who are even disposed to press it beyond all due and reasonable limits; and it is mainly from the endea-

vour to correct those extreme opinions, and to inculcate a more moderate and enlightened view of the claims and use of the Scripture records, that the difficulty arises in obtaining a patient hearing from those whose prepossessions are perhaps strongly in an opposite direction.

Ancient views lost sight of in modern times.

In respect to the particular points here adverted to, it is equally true and remarkable that the theology of past ages appears to have been more rational and enlightened than that which has been at least very popular in modern times. The writings of the Fathers of the ancient Church, as well as those of many of the earlier Reformers, exhibit a clear perception of the broad distinction between Judaism and Christianity, which in other schools and systems, more widely diffused in modern times, seems to have been forgotten and overlooked. Distinctions, which, from the circumstances of the age, forced themselves on the notice of earlier periods, were lost sight of in later times.

Modes of viewing the subject familiar to the ancient divines continued to be adhered to so long as those writers were taken as the guides of theological opinion or dogmatic controversy; but with other times

other modes of conceiving the whole subject were adopted, and, with new objects of thought and discussion, the older forms of opinion were often replaced by others of a far inferior stamp, dictated rather by the controversial spirit of the moment than by more profound, calm, and enlightened inquiry; and with the freedom of Protestantism there has, not unnaturally, arisen a tendency in theological discussion to fall extensively into the hands of a less learned class of disputants, and of a body of expositors more distinguished for zeal than knowledge, whence has originated a more superficial, but specious and popular style of theologising, better suited to the vulgar taste, but wanting in the deeper qualities of more critical discrimination and enlarged ideas.

Puritanical theology

From such advocates, tenets so grateful to human nature, as many of those of the Puritanical school, could not but be expected to receive full encouragement and support; and such, accordingly, has been the prevalent and popular tendency of that species of theology which has maintained its ascendency among the less educated classes, and which, taken up and enforced with the characteristic vehemence of earnest but illiterate men, is not likely to be

Prevalent at the present day.

adequately opposed by the more calm and retiring arguments of the contemplative and liberal-minded inquirer, still less by the apathy of refined indifference, which, if it make any manifestation at all, is likely, from mere fear of giving offence, to assume the popular tone, and affect a compliance with the popular spirit.

We cannot, indeed, be surprised that low and unworthy views of the spirit and character of the Christian doctrine should acquire popularity, as they address themselves with more powerful effect to the tendencies of human infirmity and ignorance, or that with such views, again, persons of higher attainments would too generally fall in, if only to avoid the trouble of inquiry and thought, and the odium of opposing popular errors.

Popular interest in theological questions.

The degree of interest taken generally in questions of a theological kind has been very different in different ages. In past times, instances have not been wanting of controversies, even on the most abstruse points, in which all classes have felt deeply concerned,—which have enlisted popular feeling on either side, and have even agitated and convulsed the whole community. In the present age the case is very different; and the natural tendency of opinion,

among the better-informed classes, has been rather in the direction of indifference to such inquiries. And this has been traced to probable causes arising out of the progress of opinion and the advance of knowledge on other subjects, which has led to an increasing indisposition to the discussion of questions which reason is incompetent to solve. Theological questions are, doubtless, viewed at present in a very different spirit from that in which they were once regarded. It is to be expected that, among the better-informed classes, and in a more *inquiring*, and therefore (since doubt must precede inquiry) a more *doubting* age[1], questions of a dogmatic nature, which formerly seemed matters of logical certainty, will be seen to be really dependent on assumptions in themselves little capable of such definition as to render them a fit basis for that kind of reasoning which, in times of greater ignorance and credulity, was imagined to possess such demonstrative power.

Critical discussion of theological questions needed;

But while such remarks may truly apply to those points of metaphysical subtlety, or doctrinal detail, which once formed the chief and material portion of

[1] See Buckle's "History of Civilization," vol. i. pp. 307, 327.

the body of theological discussion, yet there are numerous questions which, in the present state of knowledge, claim the attention of reasoning inquirers, to which, in former ages, little attention was paid, and which involve the very foundations of religious belief—besides those of another class scarcely less important, which refer to the critical examination of documentary evidence, and the philological and historical inquiries which any rational search into the Scripture records must entail.

But often disparaged.

But while rational inquiry, learned criticism, and philosophical argument are so largely applied to other departments of knowledge, where, doubtless, they find their more peculiarly congenial sphere of exercise, there is too great a tendency to neglect, and even censure, the cultivation of more enlightened modes of thought with respect to topics which so pre-eminently call for the most careful and enlarged examination —especially on the part of theologians, who are too often more interested in the support of particular systems, to which they feel such free inquiries might be dangerous, than in the pure search after truth.

Theological questions, if neglected in a higher sense, will very naturally be taken up in a lower and

more unworthy spirit, and abandoned to those of ignorant, narrow, and one-sided views; and, instead of a critical, dispassionate, and comprehensive study of subjects having points of contact with so many branches of human knowledge, they are too commonly pursued only in the spirit of bigoted and exclusive dogmatism on the one hand, or of vague and visionary speculation on the other.

Influence physical of discovery

The unparalleled advances in physical science which characterise the present age, alone suffice to stamp a totally different character on the spirit of all its discussions; and they now are, and will be to a far greater extent, influential on the tone of theology. It is now perceived by all inquiring minds that the advance of true scientific principles, and the grand inductive conclusions of universal and eternal law and order, are at once the basis of all rational theology, and give the death-blow to superstition.

The influence of the advance of physical science on religion is, in truth, a very wide subject, and involves some topics, at once of great difficulty and high import in regard to the very foundation of a belief in revelation, and its received external evidences. These, however, are questions which will

not fall within the scope of the present discussion, but will be reserved for a future opportunity. With reference to our more immediate object, it will suffice to remark that, notwithstanding the acknowledged benefits to pure religion which result from the scientific enlightenment of the age, there has too commonly existed a feeling of hostility against it on the part of some very religious persons.

Opposed by bigotry.

Theology has been too commonly beset with a spirit of a narrower kind, unwilling to acknowledge those broader and more enlightening truths; and thus, from the first dawn of the true inductive philosophy, there has always existed, on the part of a bigoted and exclusive class of theologians, a deeply seated jealousy and suspicion of the advance of physical discovery. Some better-informed theologians, indeed, of several schools, have had the wisdom to pursue a better policy; and it is now mainly the spirit of Puritanism which is arrayed in the most inveterate hostility to science. And in a more especial manner has this been evinced at the present day,

Geology.

when the discoveries of Geology have made advances far more formidable to its claims, and subversive of its Judaical principles, than were all the assaults made

by the heresies of Copernicus and Galileo on the authority of the Catholic decrees in a past age.

Fallacious attempts at reconciliation.

At the present time the spirit of hostility has rather assumed the insidious exterior of a specious assumption of scientific pretensions, under which the truths of geology have been so disguised and perverted as to appear to effect a kind of reconciliation —sometimes so skilfully managed as to mislead the unwary general reader, by an artful contexture of plausible misrepresentations, into the persuasion that no real contradiction exists. But no such fallacies can hold their ground in the face of the better information now so universally disseminated.

Formularies of the Church of England favourable to enlightenment.

On the other hand, the more liberal system, which is eminently compatible with, if not sanctioned and fostered by, the comprehensive spirit and formularies of the Church of England, is of a kind entirely favourable to the progress of enlightenment; and especially that section of her theologians who have been the most disposed to appeal to the authority of Christian antiquity for the basis of their belief have the least need to fear any collision with the representations of the Old Testament, and can best afford to dispense with that literal subserviency to the Hebrew text which

the more enlightened knowledge of the age so powerfully tends to shake off.

Low views the source of objection against Christianity.

But the question at issue is one of wider and deeper interest than any mere point of party polemics or controversial detail. It is to the low and unworthy views too often adopted, and to the neglect and even studied and systematic disparagement of rational inquiry into the true nature and spirit of Christianity, that we must trace a large share of the difficulties which have been felt, and the objections which have been raised, against it.

The spirituality of Christianity to be preserved.

If Christianity be for all times and people, its real meaning must be suited to all degrees of advance. In an age of enlightenment, Christian belief must be equally enlightened; in an age of inquiry, it must be able to stand inquiry; and, towards securing the permanence of its influence, nothing can be more important than the careful preservation of its purity, the rectification of erroneous conceptions of its design, the clearing away of the corruptions which have fastened upon it.

False liberality.

Yet many who make professions of a very liberal, enlarged kind, will ask, in a contemptuous tone, Why insist on these distinctions? One form is as good as

another; why dwell on dogmatic peculiarities or scrupulous questions of the purity or corruption of particular systems, which savour of a narrow, technical, exclusive spirit?

We answer, for the very purpose of asserting more enlarged views, by showing that they are those of real Christianity when divested of the unworthy admixture of superstition and fanaticism with which human tendencies have been prone to confound, overlay, and corrupt it.

Practical evils to be obviated.

The questions here discussed are not mere points of abstract doctrinal controversy, but have a direct and important practical bearing; and if it be regarded as unimportant whether men hold what we may deem a mistaken, superstitious idea of Christian doctrine, it will hardly be denied that the practical results are serious evils, when we find them leading to religious bitterness and animosity, fanaticism, moroseness, and intolerant bigotry, and a rigid adherence to formal austerities, for the exercise of which, however mistaken we may deem them, we cannot but wish the most unlimited freedom to be granted, but against which we cannot avoid protesting—more especially when the votaries of such principles cannot be content

merely to follow these practices themselves, but are constantly making aggressive attempts to enforce them upon others. Against such evils it is surely worth while to contend; but we can only do so effectually by striking at the root of the mischief, in the refutation of the erroneous first principles whence it springs.

Truth under various forms.

Again, we may admit that there are many fundamental truths really included under the varied professions of external forms of belief, though in too many of those forms concealed, perverted, or frustrated by the admixture of extraneous elements on the one hand, combined with defective or erroneous conceptions of the true nature of Christianity on the other; but then we should only be the more anxious, by clearing away those obstructions, to bring to light, to develope and vindicate, those higher and purer elements of truth.

Misconceptions of Christianity.

Ignorance of Christianity is the stronghold of objection and disbelief,—an ignorance which it has been too often the culpable policy of many of its professed supporters to encourage. And it is mainly from taking, as real Christianity, those corrupt forms in which it has been invested, and those incidental accompaniments and extraneous additions with which

its essence has been mixed up, that the most serious misconceptions and objections have arisen.

Corruptions of Christianity to be exposed.

It has been emphatically observed by the late excellent Archdeacon Hare, that one of the most important objects with those who really desire to uphold Christianity at the present day, must be to "endeavour to purify it from its corruptions;"[1] and, as he expressly contends, it is an object which ought to be attempted notwithstanding its difficulties,—compromise or disguise only tending to greater danger.

Offence to prejudices.

But in the attempt to do so, the chief difficulty arises from the offence we can hardly avoid thus giving to the prejudices of sincere but ill-informed piety; and if the advocates of Christianity find it difficult to persuade sceptics of the truth of its doctrine, they must acknowledge it a not less arduous task to convince ordinary believers of its practical simplicity. And it cannot be disputed that a more clear elucidation of the professed *nature* of the Christian doctrine, in some of its most material characteristics, is most essential to a just estimate of its claims and evidences, in which the *internal* character of that doctrine

[1] Life of Sterling, p. 230.

necessarily holds a place *at least* equally important and significant with any external attestations.

Relation of Christianity to the Old Testament.

With reference to these remarks, there is perhaps no one of the various points of view, in which Christianity may be regarded, of more immediate importance at the present day than that which regards the question of its relation or connexion with the Old Testament, with the several characteristic points of distinction by which it stands contrasted with the previous religious systems therein recorded, —a point which has been too extensively the subject of the most unhappy confusion and misconception among some religious parties, to the great obscuration of the spiritual nature of the Gospel, and the too frequent disparagement and rejection of its claims.

Attacks on Christianity as confounded with Judaism.

Among the various attacks which Christianity had to sustain from the Deists of the seventeenth century and the early part of the next, one of the most dangerous and insidious, because the most plausible, was that originating with Morgan, and more extensively carried out by Chubb, grounded entirely on laying hold of the prevalent error, assumed for truth, "that Chris-

tianity was founded on Judaism." They thus traced the whole of its doctrines and institutions to a Jewish origin, and even contended not only that it was a mere modification of Judaism, but that it "altered Judaism for the worse." Thus, fixing upon its incidental accessories as its essentials, and then fully admitting and truly asserting the imperfect and transitory, and even, to us, objectionable nature of the Mosaic system, they involved Christianity in their rejection of Judaism. Indeed, this view was but a practical adoption of that which had long before been broached by Charron[1], who contended, that as the religion of the Jews was derived from that of Egypt, so Christianity originated out of Judaism, and, in the same way, out of both of these Mahommedanism took its rise; and thus a theory of the supposed similar origin and *development* of all religious systems led to his rejection of them all alike.

Alleged development of religious systems.

It can hardly be necessary to comment on the entire absence of real parallelism in these cases, or on the singular meaning which must attach to the term *development*, if we affirm that a religious system was

[1] De la Sagesse, &c. 1601.

*developed* out of one *diametrically opposed to it.* There might, doubtless, be such a development, in the sense of monotheism being developed out of idolatry, Protestantism out of Popery, knowledge out of ignorance, or light out of darkness. In fact, the Mosaic institution was mainly directed to *putting down and destroying* the superstitions to which the Israelites had become attached in Egypt, and, by the introduction of an elaborate ceremonial, to wean them from that idolatry to which they were so prone, but which the law denounced with its severest penalties.

Judaism, again, so far from being recognised and embodied, was *expressly set aside* by the Gospel, as a "ministration of death" and "condemnation," which was to "vanish away," and for which a "new and better covenant" was to be substituted with respect to the Jewish convert, while to the Gentile the Gospel was a *wholly new* faith, without any development out of his previous idolatry, which it directly called on him to *renounce.*

Judaism indeed *professed* to look to a Messiah; but both Judaism and, still more emphatically, Christianity utterly repudiated looking to any other prophet to come *after* the Messiah, or any *further*

revelation of the Divine will: thus, in whatever degree Mahommedanism might profess to recognise either, it was no parallel case of any kind of real development.

Practical evils of Puritanism.

But to return. In those theological controversies which have attracted general attention, the interest popularly excited has often been apparently most disproportionate to the real importance of the question, or its bearing on practical objects or intelligible feelings.

Thus, men's minds were roused into vehement alarm some years ago at attempts to revive some points of ecclesiastical ceremonial, while at present public opinion is hardly awakened to the far greater practical enormities of the invasions of puritanical intolerance, concentrated in the enforcement of Sabbatism. If any theological topic can be said to come home directly to the daily life of every man, it is surely the question of this observance, and of the alleged obligations on which it is maintained. Its practical influence is constantly interfering with the pursuits, enjoyments, and even domestic and personal freedom of all, and especially the working classes. Yet few are found willing to emancipate

Sabbatism.

themselves or others from that influence, even where they fully acknowledge the unsoundness of its foundation. Those who are foremost to raise an outcry against Romanism, or the merest semblance of a leaning to its practices, passively yield to a superstitious formalism more oppressive in its exactions, and at least equally destructive of the spiritual simplicity of Christianity.

Broader principles to be examined.

The question, however, when regarded (as is here proposed) not with a reference to controversial party purposes, or to supposed objects of civil or social utility, but solely with a view to the truth of the broader grounds on which it rests, will be seen to be merely a subordinate part of a far wider subject, dependent on higher principles, and demanding the more extended examination which it will be the design of the ensuing essays to give.

The principal object here proposed, as before intimated, is a simple matter-of-fact inquiry into the actual relation, or connexion, of Christianity with the previous dispensations announced in the Old Testament,—determined according to the express announcements of the scriptural writers, and the professed design and avowed object of the re-

ligious systems they describe. It is, however, peculiarly necessary to remark, and to guard against, some very prevalent notions as to the mode of viewing and interpreting the contents of those records generally. To this purport some preliminary observations must therefore be directed, which will form the subject of the next essay.

# ESSAY II.

ON THE

# APPLICATION AND MISAPPLICATION

OF

# SCRIPTURE.

# ESSAY II.

## ON THE APPLICATION AND MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE.

Views of Scripture in different times.

THE value assigned to the collection of multifarious records united in the volume of the Bible, the spirit in which they have been regarded, and the use and application which readers of different classes have been disposed to make of them, have been extremely different in different ages, and under different forms of religious profession.

Appeal to Scripture in earlier ages.

Throughout the earlier stages of Christian theological literature, we trace the predominant influence of a dogmatic authority, which admitted little independence of thought. The original form of traditional teaching long kept up a powerful ascendancy, and through ages of darkness and ignorance became gradually amplified, and at length embodied into one vast scheme of ecclesiastical infallibility, claiming to be the living oracle of Divine truth, to which even the written records of the Bible were necessarily but subordinate.

These records were indeed read, appealed to, and interpreted, but wholly in a sense subservient to the dogmas of the Church, and subjected to its authority. Even in those fanciful and allegorical interpretations of Scripture in which many of the ancient Christian writers indulged, we find the influence of the same servile spirit, little guided by any notions of higher principles of rational exposition or critical discrimination.

At the age of the Reformation.

At the great epoch of the cotemporaneous revival of learning and the commencement of the Reformation, the rising tendency of the age for the cultivation of literature might have been expected to find a congenial resource in the freer study of the Bible. But the spirit of Protestantism was, in fact, for the most part, of a narrower character; and even while it professedly threw open to all the written Word, it practically restricted the application of it by the rule of the most contracted interpretation, or rather by a servile adherence to the mere letter of what was held to be verbal inspiration. This was carried out by many to an extreme equally at variance with all rational principles of interpretation, and with the spiritual character of the Christian doctrines,

which thus became strangely mixed up with heterogeneous elements.

Appeal of the Reformers to Scripture,

The appeal professedly made by the more moderate of the Reformers was to the written Word, which they held to be the sole authoritative or authentic depository of the doctrines and precepts of revelation. Its decisions were to be received as final, and nothing insisted on as necessary to salvation but what was directly and distinctly delivered in it according to its right sense and reasonable construction.

But to follow out such inquiry into the tenor and meaning of Scripture would, of course, imply a discriminating study of the sacred volume,—would involve considerable labour, and be encompassed with many obstacles requiring much perseverance to surmount, and, after all, must (from the very nature of the principle) admit of endless diversity of result, consequent upon unavoidable varieties of interpretation. This, however, it was soon felt, would obviously but ill supply the loss of that comfortable certainty and undisturbed repose which the minds and consciences of men had been accustomed to enjoy in the bosom of an infallible church. And accordingly teachers were not wanting who professed

Corrupted into "literalism."

to remedy this deficiency, and were prepared with methods of religious assurance not less oracular in their pretensions, and even more easy of application.

Extreme views of inspiration.

The actual text of the Bible, it was contended, was wholly and entirely the very dictation of the Holy Spirit — every sentence, every expression, every word the very breathing of inspiration,—the entire volume one systematic complete scheme of truth, religious, civil, and social—nay, even political, historical, and scientific—delivered into the hands of the faithful, who, at the same time endowed with supernatural illumination, were enabled at once to see and to understand the whole compass and meaning of its contents, every part of which had its direct and immediate application—for nothing was to be supposed written by inspiration, but what was addressed alike to readers in all ages and under all circumstances; not a sentence, not a word was to be overlooked — not a passage, however apparently barren of instruction, which was not to be made fruitful — not an expression, however apparently trivial, which had not its hidden and mystical meaning discoverable at once by the gifted reader. Discrepancies were not to be regarded, for each part

Application of detached texts.

must needs harmonise with every other part; and the notion of drawing any other distinction as to the different *object, design,* or *application* of different parts of Scripture—of regarding any diversities of time, place, or circumstances, was accounted almost profane; to question the rigidly literal sense of every passage, or its immediate application in all particulars to men in all times, was looked upon as equivalent to little less than questioning its Divine character altogether. If a doctrine was to be maintained, it sufficed to find, anywhere within the limits of the sacred volume, any passage the words of which, abstractedly taken, might apparently contain or imply it. To think of connexion with the context, or of any other considerations which might limit or elucidate the meaning, was unnecessary, and, in fact, little less than impious. If a duty was to be enforced, a precept anywhere extracted from the sacred writings was held equally applicable to all persons under all circumstances, and in all ages.

Rational interpretation discarded.

Thus, with a numerous section of the Protestant communities, a mere literal adherence to the text of the Bible constituted as complete a spiritual slavery as any which had been imposed by the dic-

tation of a domineering priesthood and an infallible church; they did but transfer the claim of oracular authority from the priest to the text; they discarded the infallibility in a living church, only to acknowledge it in a dead written record.

Puritanism. Such was the first principle and foundation of the system which may be best generally designated by the name of Puritanism, which has exerted as pernicious an influence over modern Christianity on the one side, as Romanism on the other.

In this mode of theologising we may perhaps trace the powerful reaction of the spirit of Biblical inquiry just emancipated from the tyranny of ecclesiastical dictation, and not as yet exercised in the more comprehensive and rational principles of critical interpretation, and thus recoiling into a scarcely less servile slavery to the mere letter of the Bible—that absolute worship of the text, which has been fitly termed Bibliolatry. "Bibliolatry." Hence, even to later times a similar spirit has been propagated, when the advance of intelligence, and the comparative cessation of the same stirring causes of high excitement, might in some degree have been expected to be more favourable to calm and rational views, the admission of which

has been but very partially realised, even at the present day.

That such should be the view taken by illiterate fanatics is no more than might be expected; but that a mode of proceeding, little different from this in principle, has been common even among the superior class of divines, will hardly be disputed by any one at all versed in theological writings. And that it prevails widely, even at the present day, is as little questionable by any one who canvasses with but common precision the language and arguments of hundreds of ordinary religious discourses and publications.[1] But it will not be surprising that such notions should find ready acceptance with a large portion of mankind; for, without going the lengths of fanaticism, for the individual to have open before him an unerring oracle, every word and sentence of which he may take without further examination or consideration, as

Acceptable to human nature.

[1] If the reader should think this representation overcharged, or doubt, at least, its applicability at the present day, for sufficient proof to the contrary he may be referred to the work of Dr Gaussen of Geneva, originally entitled "Theopneustia," but of which a translation has appeared, called "'It is Written;' or, Every Word and Expression contained in the Scriptures proved to be from God," by Professor L. Gaussen, 1848, in which the verbal inspiration of every passage is maintained to an extreme which justifies every assertion above made.

propounded immediately to himself from above, is an easy resource, which relieves him at once from all labour and perplexity in *searching* for the truth,—an object of all things the most desirable to human infirmity and indolence.

Plea of reverence for inspiration.

And in thus adopting without inquiry, as from a sort of oracular authority, the first sense which appears on the surface, or which his imagination sees there, the reader comforts himself with the reflection that he is discharging a duty of reverence to the Divine word, and indulges in self-commendation for the exercise of much spiritual humility in thus placing his trust in the inspired text, and not presuming to be wise "above that which is written," and assures himself that he is at least adopting a *safe* mode of interpretation.

Neglect of ordinary rules.

It would seem as if the theologian, when entering upon the field of sacred research, thought it not only allowable, but necessary, to discard all those principles of interpretation which he would in common reason have adopted in the exposition of any secular writings, and that the distinctions which in other cases are forced upon the attention, between fact and metaphor—between history

and poetry—between local and national allusions and truths of universal application, were all to be laid aside when the volume of Scripture was opened,—that its contents were to be examined by some other rule,—peculiarities and allusions, allegory and matter of fact, the connection of argument, and the reference to times, places, persons, and circumstances, were all to be lost sight of in one undistinguishing blind adherence to the mere letter of texts,—that the Divine will was to be recognised in the mere letter of any single passage taken promiscuously anywhere out of the multifarious writings contained in the volume of the Scriptures, new or old, Jewish or Christian, and applied with equal disregard of the context from which it was wrested, or the conditions of the case to which it was to be tortured.

Leads to dogmatism.

The followers of such a method brought together, thus strangely, a mass of heterogeneous testimonies to mix in a dogmatic system; or, as an eminent writer has expressed it, "they made an anagram of Scripture." Instead of the rational, humble, and patient endeavour to discover the meaning probably *designed* in the "mind of the writer," it seemed to be supposed that the sense of the text was

rather to be disclosed by some mystical power in its mere letter, addressing itself to the privileged reader.

The belief in the inspired character of Scripture may doubtless modify the course to be pursued in examining its contents; but, allowing for considerable difference of opinion as to the meaning and extent of inspiration, it yet by no means follows that this consideration should make a difference so entire in kind as that often supposed, in the way by which we are to seek to arrive at the meaning, or make our applications of the contents of the sacred books, whose instructions were all conveyed in human language, and addressed through the medium of comparison and analogy with human ideas.

Fanaticism.

The extreme doctrine of the enthusiast, who sees in the mere letter of every detached text a direct message from on high to himself, extravagant as it may appear when broadly avowed, is no more than what, a little modified and softened down, coincides with impressions much more generally adopted. And we commonly find, too, the mass of mere worldly-minded nominal Christians most forward to pay this sort of blind, but easy, homage to Scripture. The great majority of ordinary professing believers follow

Adopted by nominal believers.

without inquiry the same indiscriminate devotion to the mere letter of the sacred text, as a conventional and established point of religion, without a thought as to its real purport, and even with a feeling of offence and disgust at any attempt to break in upon the illusion, and to supply views of the subject more accordant with truth and reason, which they condemn as unsettling men's minds, hazarding the stability of established systems, and endangering the cause of religion and all social obligations,—and which the more zealous dogmatists no less anathematise as subverting the Word of God, and undermining the Gospel of Christ.

Even among some better informed.

That such ideas should prevail among the many is indeed not surprising, when we consider the great deficiency of all habits of reflection or inquiry on the subject. But that the same ignorant notions should also be commonly avowed or betrayed among those of better information, and even among the ministers of religion, might excite surprise, did we not remark, that as this mode of referring to Scripture affords, on the one hand (as we have already observed), an easy means of satisfying an uninquiring faith among the many, so, on the other hand, among the better-

instructed and instructors, it supplies a scarcely less ready mode of supporting the cause of a party, of defending a peculiar dogmatic system, or of retaining a powerful and convenient hold on the minds of the multitude. But perhaps these ideas are almost unconsciously adopted in very many instances, where, from long habit, no suspicion of their reasonableness has ever crossed the mind. Yet there can surely be few of the most ordinary discernment, who do not, the moment it is simply stated, admit the unreasonableness of appealing to the isolated letter of a Scripture text in a way which they would reject as utterly puerile if it applied to any other work.

More rational views to be recognised.

"It shall greately helpe ye to understande Scripture, yf thou marke not onely what is spoken or wrytten, but of whom, and to whom, with what wordes, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, consyderynge what goeth before, and what followeth after." [1]

Such is the simple but pithy advice of the Reformer. Its homeliness may be despised by some;

[1] Myles Coverdale's "Prologue unto the Christian Reader," Trans. of Bible, 1535.

but its importance may be better estimated from the continual errors into which some fall from the neglect of it. In interpreting Scripture, to show that the authority we quote was really designed to apply to the question in hand, would seem a rule too obvious to require formally adverting to, were it not so often overlooked.

Distinction between the several parts of Revelation.

Among persons professing to receive the Bible as the authentic record of what in general they believe is Divine revelation, it is remarkable how little attention is commonly given to the obvious diversity of nature and purport in those very distinct portions of which the sacred volume consists. Yet, to any one who does but for a moment reflect on the widely remote dates, the extremely diversified character, of the contents, the totally dissimilar circumstances and occasions of the composition of the several writings, it must be obvious how essentially they require to be viewed with careful discrimination as to the variety of conditions and objects which they evince, if they are to be in any degree rightly understood, or applied according to the clear intentions of the writers. But manifest as these considerations are, and readily admitted when simply put before any

reader of the most ordinary attainments and discernment, it is singular to observe how commonly they are practically lost sight of in the too prevalent modes of reading and applying Scripture.

Between the Old Testament and New.

In this point of view it must be allowed a matter of the most primary importance, as bearing on the whole purport and design of the Bible, to apprehend rightly the general relation, but at the same time the characteristic differences, of the Old and New Testament, the Law and the Gospel, the distinctive character to be traced, and the sort of connection actually subsisting between them. Nor does this turn on considerations of any nice or critical kind, demanding extensive learning to appreciate, or deep study to judge of; it implies a mere reference to matters of fact—especially as to the distinction between the Old and New Testament—which require but to be indicated to be understood. Notwithstanding the plain and obvious tenor of these considerations, it is peculiarly worthy of observation how little they are regarded in the actual adoption of opinions on these subjects.

Too commonly overlooked.

Confused views prevalent.

On hardly any point, perhaps, at the present day, are confused and unsatisfactory ideas more commonly prevalent: not only among ordinary, careless, or

formal readers of Scripture, but even among many of better information and more serious religious views, the habit to which we have referred leads to confounding together the contents of all parts of the sacred volume, whether of the old or new dispensation, of the Hebrew or of the Christian Scriptures, regarding them, as it were, all as one book or code of religion, citing detached texts from both, and promiscuously taking precepts and institutions, promises and threatenings belonging to peculiar dispensations, and under peculiar conditions, and applying them universally, without regard to times, persons, or circumstances. Thus it has happened that many imagine ancient institutions, or laws given in the remotest periods, and under widely different circumstances from those at present prevailing, to be now obligatory. Thus theories have been largely adopted, in accordance with which the authority and obligation of the Jewish law have been mixed up with those of the universal gospel, the precepts of the Old Testament with those of the New, the religion of the Hebrew nation with the new and catholic religion of Christ, in ways which, to an unprepossessed mind, would appear very extraordinary.

Not a consequence from inspiration.

Such a mode of appealing to Scripture is sometimes even defended, as evincing a meritorious reverence for its Divine character, and upheld as a consequence from the belief in its *inspiration*. Yet, in whatever sense that belief may be entertained, it surely by no means follows that *inspired* authority may not have a reference to one object, to one party, to one age, and not to another. A precept, or an institution, or a declaration, may have been addressed to one people or time, though not in the least designed to apply generally,—without any disparagement to its Divine character.

The assertion of the *inspiration* of Scripture is one thing; the consideration of the *purposes for which* it is inspired is another; while it is difficult to see how any one, in these obvious distinctions, can find ground of disparagement to the value of any portion of the Bible, or to the religious use which may be made of it by the discerning and enlightened Christian who carefully draws those distinctions as to the application of its several parts which the sacred writers themselves clearly indicate.

Some consequences of the literal principle.

It will be instructive, perhaps, to illustrate these observations more in detail by a reference to one or

two remarkable instances in which the application of the principles here glanced at has been actually carried out in the maintenance of theological systems.

The system of Calvinism.

To take one example. The spirit of the literal application of all passages of Scripture, without discrimination, has perhaps never been displayed so as more fully to evince its peculiar character and tendency, than in the conception and support of the *Calvinistic theory*,—a doctrine which, if not in express form, yet in principle and spirit, appears to have been extensively adopted in earlier times, and, though it doubtless attained its more exact and systematic development in the hands of the Genevan Reformer, yet was certainly not *peculiar* to him, as it was held by others of his contemporaries, and its rudiments may be traced up to the writings of Augustine, and even earlier.

A remarkable feature in the history of Christianity.

The study of this remarkable system is eminently suggestive, whether considered in its origin, its progress, or its decline,—whether we look to the arguments by which it is supported, or those by which it is usually assailed and considered to be refuted,—to the high position it once occupied, at

least in the estimation of a large section of the Protestant world, as the very standard of orthodox views, or to the comparative insignificance into which it has now dwindled—even when it is nominally professed, being universally modified and softened in all its harsher features. Regarded as to its broad principle, it was an element which doubtless pervaded very widely the doctrine of the early Reformers, and which appears a necessary consequence of the then existing views of Biblical *literalism* which have already been adverted to.

That principle once admitted, the whole predestinarian system, even in its utmost rigour, and with all its momentous and terrific consequences, stands forth in a kind of awful grandeur perfectly consistent with itself in all points, and unassailable, unless on a totally different ground of attack. Adopting this literal view, the Reformer, with the text of the Bible as his only guide, was directly conducted to the one principle of arbitrary *grace*, as the clue to the whole scheme of the Divine counsels. The *letter* of innumerable isolated texts from all parts of the Bible bore testimony, not to be gainsaid, to the grand dogma of the eternal, arbitrary, irrespective, irreversible decrees

Founded on the letter of texts.

by which the whole counsel of God is discovered in the scheme *of grace* and of reprobation predetermined everlastingly.[1] The sum and substance of the whole revelation is—"He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." This at once intimately pervades and fully explains all the seeming complexity of the Divine dealings, in a way against which no exception can be taken: "Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Into this everything is resolvable: to allege anything against it is the impious murmuring of a reprobate soul. The great mass of

[1] "*Quod ergo Scriptura clarè ostendit dicimus*, æterno et immutabili consilio, Deum semel constituisse quos olim semel assumere vellet in salutem, quos rursum exitio devovere."—*Calvini Instit.* lib. iii. c. 21, § 7.

"Non enim pari conditione creantur omnes: sed aliis vita æterna, aliis damnatio æterna præordinatur."—*Ib.* iii. c. 21, § 5.

. . . . "Demum subnectit clausulam, 'Deum cujus vult misereri, et quem vult indurare.' Vides ut in solum Dei arbitrium utrumque conferat? . . . . eo admonentur homines *nihil causæ quærere extra ejus voluntatem.*"—*Ib.* c. 22, § 11.

"Iterum quæro, Unde factum est ut tot gentes una cum liberis eorum infantibus æternæ morti involveret lapsus Adæ absque remedio, nisi quia Deo ita visum est? *Decretum quidem horribile, fateor:* inficiari tamen nemo poterit quin præsciverit Deus quem exitum esset habiturus homo, antequam ipsum conderet; *et ideo præsciverit quia decreto suo sic ordinarat.*"—*Ib.* c. 23, § 7.

. . . . "Intelligunt nullam esse peccatorum differentiam, modo adsit fides . . . . fides, hoc est Dei illuminatio, quæ inter pios et impios distinguit."—*Ib.* c. 24, § 17.

mankind probably cannot receive it: to the carnal mind it is foolishness; "the rest were blinded." And upon all, except the chosen vessels of grace, lies the eternal sentence of reprobation, at once excluding them from salvation, and blinding them to the understanding of its announcement. A sentence at which human infirmity may shudder—"an horrible decree," even Calvin himself was obliged to exclaim, as he ruthlessly contemplated this logical consequence of his grand principle. But the answer to all objections is simply, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Hath not the potter power over the clay?" The chosen are enabled infallibly thus to see and rejoice in the true light sooner or later; whether after a longer or a shorter course of sin and seeming estrangement, at the time appointed from all eternity they are visited, and transformed from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; they lead even on earth the life of the glorified in heaven; or if they ever seem to fall from it, they are indefectibly restored, till they are finally translated to the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. If other passages of Scripture are adduced apparently hostile to this doctrine, this can

only arise from the false interpretation of blinded human judgment. The broad principle is set forth with such fulness of evidence to the faithful reader, that, once adopted, it gains fresh proofs from nearly every sentence in Scripture, viewed through the medium it supplies.

Objections from reason inadmissible.

If objections be raised by natural reason or moral sense, on the plea of the inconsistency of such doctrines with the Divine attributes, with the goodness and beneficence of the Deity, with the nature of moral obligation, they are peremptorily silenced. Reason itself, after all, is but a part of our essentially corrupt nature; all its teaching, therefore, partakes in that corruption, and to follow its dictates, is not merely error, but sin. All such speculative objections against the positive word of Scripture are therefore rejected and dismissed with absolute scorn and contempt by the mind once enlightened in the true faith. Even the more precise and formidable objection, that this scheme makes God the author of sin, is at once disposed of in a similar manner: for all things are determined solely by the Divine will; has not God himself said, "I create evil"?[1]

[1] Isaiah xlv. 7.

The very distinction between sin and holiness is purely the result of the same decrees: all we know is that, by the Divine fiat, the one is coupled with blessing, the other with cursing, and that, except so far as it pleased God to remove the curse in some instances, and to affix the blessing, all are exactly alike.

Moral principles disowned.

Hence all distinction of goodness and wickedness is purely arbitrary; all notion of moral right or wrong, moral merit or demerit in our actions, results merely from the corrupt standard of our natural reason. Hence the denial of moral distinctions or responsibility in the carnal sense of the term. Hence men may sin without any conscious ill intention, in the mere blindness of the unregenerate heart. Hence it follows that the most *immoral* profligate, and the man of the most heroic *moral* virtue, are equally reprobates if uninfluenced by grace; or, as Augustine said, "the highest virtues of the heathen were but splendid sins."

Those who worshipped wood and stone thought they were worshipping true gods; but they were *sinful* idolaters. The heretic, though he conscientiously thinks himself right, is a sinner in departing from the truth; or rather his error is merely the proof of his being in a state of sin and reprobation.

General reflections.

Such is a striking instance of the fair and inevitable results of the principle of a prostration of the understanding before the letter of the Bible, and an indiscriminate application of detached texts from all parts of Scripture—a practice which has always been the stronghold of theological *dogmatism:* and though, at the present day, we cannot but hope that a better spirit is manifesting itself among enlightened divines of all communions; yet if we look back at the harsh schemes of narrow doctrine and illiberal exclusiveness which have characterised various parties, we may trace their strength to the predominance of this blind adherence to a literal, immediate application of Scripture, without distinction of times or circumstances. Nevertheless it must be owned that such systems have often had a consistency and completeness within themselves, which has formed their recommendation to acceptance with many. This first principle once admitted, they have appeared to stand on unassailable ground; fenced about with an array of *texts,* they defy the attacks of opponents.

Built upon the literal application of peculiar Scriptural expressions, systems assailing the very foundations of morality have triumphed. Referring every-

thing to the Divine counsels, irrespectively of their just interpretation, the most revolting conclusions appeared obvious inferences. Laying hold of certain detached texts, without regard to the grand characteristics evinced in the progressive development of the Divine dispensations, the advocates of these views discarded all moral considerations as carnal, and thence contended that all moral obedience is mere bondage to "beggarly elements," the letter of the Divine law is merely the sentence of our condemnation. Thus the same principle, literally carried out, leads to all the monstrous doctrines of Antinomianism. Setting out from denying all moral obligation apart from the letter of the Old Testament law, and then asserting that the believer is freed from that law by faith, it followed that he was freed from all moral obligation.

Antinomianism.

Extravagant and portentous as these and some other closely allied systems, followed out to their legitimate consequences, may appear, still, so long as *the first principle of Scripture literalism is admitted*, they are unassailable. They have, as Bishop Warburton once observed, no weak side of common sense on which they can be attacked. The way, and the

Unassailable on the literal principle.

only way by which we can escape these and the like monstrous inferences, is by the unhesitating adoption of the simple ground of *rational interpretation*, the admission of an appeal to learning, the recognition of the conclusions of natural science, to correct and guide our conception of the declarations of revelation,—the allowance of critical, historical, and philological aid in determining the sense of passages according to the context, and the general design of the composition and tenor of the argument of which they may form a part,—the reference to distinctions of time, place, and circumstances,—of manners, prejudices, and opinions,—the due perception of metaphor and allegory,—and the broad rule of qualifying particular assertions by the general tenor of the dispensation of which they form a part.

Nature of anti-Calvinistic arguments.

Let us but look into the works of those divines who are esteemed as the "most orthodox" opponents of fanatical doctrines of these and other kinds here glanced at, who yet profess to make their appeal to Scripture; and what are their arguments throughout, but a continual exemplification and practical acknowledgment of the rules and principles just advocated?

The texts alleged by the Predestinarian, the Antinomian, and the like religionists, are examined, and found to bear no real testimony of the kind supposed; because in one the expression is properly metaphorical; in another it refers to some peculiarity of the Jewish dispensation; in a third it is not to be strained too literally, or is to be explained and modified by the context; or, in a fourth, it is merely an accommodation of a passage in the Old Testament to the subject in hand, or containing particular declarations which are not to be unduly and exclusively dwelt upon. But, above all, we are to be guided by the *general tenor* of Divine revelation, and by the reference (*valeat quantum*) to what is believed to be consistent with the Divine perfections, the moral nature of man, and his relation to his Creator.

Further application of the same principles.

Such is the universal tenor of their writings on this subject; but it is remarkable how little they often seem to apprehend the force of their own principles,—how readily they condemn, as most dangerous neologism and heresy, opinions of other kinds, supported by the very same modes of interpretation and criticism on which they take their stand against Calvinism. If the appeal to *the same* primary truths

or rational rules of interpretation be allowed, then any other doctrine to which such principles may be applicable, though supported by the most formidable array of *texts*, may on such grounds be equally set aside; that is, the *texts* will require a modified interpretation. Thus, *e.g.*, it is on no other ground than that on which some reject Calvinistic reprobation, that others discard the eternity of future punishments altogether; or, again, if we are to follow a servile adherence to the *letter of texts*, we must unavoidably adopt the tenets of transubstantiation and unction of the sick. And when we hear some Protestant divines attacking those tenets as *superstitious*, or repugnant *to reason*, we cannot but observe that they seem to forget the concessions involved.

Consequences involved.

Gibbon relates that at one period of his life he rejoiced at discovering a *philosophical* argument against transubstantiation, as if in one sense it needed it, or in another could be affected by it. If the mere *letter* of Divine dogmas (whether written or traditional) is to be implicitly followed, then the real presence, though at once a miracle and a mystery, is not more at variance with reason than other miracles or mysteries; on the other hand, the same

arguments by which it is set aside, would equally condemn many doctrines retained by Protestants, not at all intrinsically more level to the comprehension, or consistent with the theories which human reason might suggest.

Selden long since remarked that "transubstantiation is but rhetoric turned into logic," but possibly did not perceive how easily the same observation might be retorted on him, and applied to many dogmas of the Protestant theology, just as much derived from logically systematising upon the letter of the scriptural expressions.

Appeal to Scripture for science.

But of all the consequences of this literal bibliolatry, and of all the forms in which it has shown itself, one of the most pernicious in its results, as well as the most preposterous in its nature, has been the practice of looking to the Bible not only as the standard of religion, but as an equal authority on all subjects,—social, political, chronological, historical, philosophical,—and as the guide not merely to religious, but to scientific truth.

It seems difficult to imagine how an idea so evidently monstrous and unreasonable should ever have come to be entertained, till we have reflected deeply

on the extreme pertinacity with which the human mind invests everything connected, however remotely, with religion,[1] in the same halo of sanctity which it attaches to the essentials of faith; and the indiscriminating and blind zeal with which it refuses to admit distinctions between the substantial truths of revelation and its incidental accessories,—or rather denies that any part can be an incidental accessory. To those, indeed, who have been in any degree accustomed to take wider views of the design and application of Scripture, it may seem superfluous to dwell on such a topic. In the former Essays[2] we have seen abundant exemplification of this preposterous kind of speculation in all its varied phases, even on the part of some professed philosophers.

In more immediate connection with our present subject, we cannot omit recurring, very briefly, to one of the instances before largely discussed,—the contradiction between the conclusions of modern

Scripture and geology.

[1] Thus, as a curious illustrative example, in the last century, when the reality of witchcraft, so long debated, was generally given up, Wesley contended, "Giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible."—*Journal*, 602, 713.

[2] Unity of Worlds, Essay II. § 3, and III. § 4. Also, Two Sermons on Christianity without Judaism. London, 1856.

geology and the cosmogony of the Jewish Scriptures. It is, indeed, a case which presents little difficulty or peculiarity to those whose views of the entire relations of Scripture and science have been duly expanded; but in the actual state of common prejudice and prevalent narrowness of views on such subjects, it acquires a peculiar value and importance, as being (unlike some of the more refined criticisms) a case of a *palpable*, obvious, and *undeniable* kind, which *compels* the most unreflecting person to give some attention to such considerations. The case only requires to be plainly and honestly brought before the general reader to be properly appreciated. Such plain statements of the actual case, and such open indications of the nature and important consequences of the contradiction thus existing, were made in former works referred to; still a brief summary may not be without its use for a considerable class of readers, to whose minds the subject may even yet, perhaps, not stand forth divested, as completely as it might be, of some shadow of misapprehension or obscurity.

Necessity for stating the case plainly.

Summary of the case.

At the present day every educated person is more or less acquainted with the truths disclosed by geo-

logy respecting the history and mode of formation of the earth's crust, and of the several races of organised beings by which it has been successively tenanted. These disclosures are clear and unequivocal; they display to our contemplation the existing state of things as by successive changes evolved out of a long series of antecedent stages. The formation of the variously dispersed beds of diversified materials did not occur at any one time, or even by any successive universal simultaneous acts, but by the gradual and local operation of varied physical agencies, accompanied by corresponding series of changes in the forms and species of organised beings tenanting the earth and the water, each partially continuing during the rise and increase of the next,—some more persistent, others dying out as new forms were introduced,—and this in a continuous succession from the earliest epochs, when none but forms now extinct prevailed, down to a time when those now existing began to hold a joint dominion, while the period which is characterised as the most recent reaches to an infinitely higher antiquity than any contemplated by history or fable. And, lastly, the origin of our own race, though it has (hitherto)

Geological view.

only been traced by remains belonging to a comparatively very recent epoch, has not yet been fixed by any certain evidence to a particular date.

These are not matters of opinion belonging to any of those portions of the science which have been open to dispute, or on which any parties among men of science, or sane inquirers of any class, are at variance. They are among the fundamental truths acknowledged by all geologists of every school, which form the acknowledged basis of the whole science, and to question which would be to question not only the whole of geology, but the very foundation of all inductive science. As science can point to no origin or beginning, so neither can it point to any one general or universal change—any one sudden, simultaneous, universal cessation of one order of things, and equally sudden and universal commencement of another. All its revelations are of *slow, partial,* gradual changes, wrought out in one small part at a time, during a long period, while all around was unchanged. It shows nothing like any universal destructions and reconstructions—nothing like a chaos suddenly changed into a creation—nothing like anarchy at one time followed by law

and order at another—but everything everywhere, through all the innumerable periods of time to which it looks back, *alike* regulated by *law* and *order*.

The Mosaic narrative.

The narrative of the creation given in the Hebrew Scriptures, whether in the brief form of the Decalogue (Exod. xx.) or in the more expanded account into which it was afterwards amplified in Genesis (ch. i.), is delivered in terms plain, clear, circumstantial, and detailed. Granting all possible latitude or advantage which any one may think derivable from possible shades of meaning in the words employed, or which a minute philology may detect in some of the expressions introduced, still the manifest entire tenor of the narrative can only convey the idea of *one* grand creative act, of a common and *simultaneous* origin of the whole material world, terrestrial and celestial, together with all its parts and appendages, as it now stands, accomplished in obedience to the Divine fiat, in a certain order and by certain stages, in six equal successive periods expressly designated as alternations of day and night, measured and determined by an evening and a morning, and necessarily (from the very

nature and object of the whole representation) of the same length as the succeeding seventh natural day, on which a peculiar blessing was pronounced, with express reference to the institution of the Sabbath among the Israelites, to enforce which is the obvious drift and intention of the whole representation, especially as introduced into the law given them from Mount Sinai.

Various attempts at explanation.

We have indeed *formerly* witnessed elaborate attempts to represent geological epochs, conformably to a kind of fanciful view of the days of the Mosaic creation, as periods of thousands of years. It is now well known that there were in fact no such six epochs. Specious attempts have been made to prove, as it was termed, "the *antiquity* of the earth in harmony with the Mosaic record;" but the mere *antiquity* of the earth is not the point in question. It is the long-continued succession of organised worlds of life by which the existing state of things has been introduced. Some, who have maintained a *series of creations,* have even done more violence to the Mosaic account than those who have explained it away. If it mean anything, it must mean essentially *one* universal creative act. Some

have fancied the six days' work to refer only to some comparatively recent act by which the *present* state of things received its origin.

All unsuccessful.

But at no recent period, whatever latitude of time we may allow (nor at any period, early or late), has there ever occurred an *universal* destruction or chaos, or an *universal* and *sudden* creation or evolution of the whole earth, with all its organic and inorganic products, out of that chaos; there has not even been any *local* or *partial* occurrence of such an imagined prodigy. Everything has gone on from one age to another through the countless periods of past duration, to the depths of primeval time, in the same unbroken chain of regular changes.

Perversions of the truth on either side.

Some divines have, more consistently, rejected all geology and all science as profane and carnal; and some, even while pretending to call themselves men of science, have stooped to the miserable policy of tampering with the truth—investing the real facts in false disguises,—to cringe to the prejudices of the many, and to pervert science into a seeming accordance with popular prepossessions.

At an earlier period, some of these representations may have passed current without so clear a percep-

tion of their untenable character; but at the present day public opinion has arrived at a greater maturity of knowledge, there now exists too large an amount of general information popularly diffused to allow the public mind to be misled, and no such chimeras, whether of false science or false theology, can long maintain their ground.

The Mosaic narrative to be taken as a whole.

The Mosaic narrative cannot be explained away by torturing the sense of words, or figurative interpretations in the details. It must be taken *as a whole;* and as a whole or continuous narrative, we manifestly see that it cannot be regarded as *historical.*

Erroneous views popular.

It may seem a superfluous repetition, to urge such topics on the reader's attention. They ought to be familiarly known, and among the numerous popular writers who have referred to the question, it ought to have received a full and free elucidation; yet, instead of endeavours really to enlighten the public mind on this subject, we find little more than continual attempts to mislead and mystify men's thoughts, or, at the most, to compromise and gloss over the question. Each attempt of the kind, successively exploded, is followed by others equally, or yet more, idle and extravagant.

The earlier attempts to square the facts to the narrative, have been succeeded by those to square the narrative to the facts; but both are equally and transparently futile. Nothing more clearly shows the hopelessness of the whole case than the nature of the interpretations proposed, which are of a kind violating the plainest rules of common sense: they proceed by such a latitude of philology, and sanction such a total vagueness in the use of words, as, if only applied generally, would readily enable us to explain away any given statement in the Bible or in any other book; they apply processes of interpretation of that kind by which, as Bishop Butler observes, "anything may be made out of anything," or, as another able critic has remarked, are of a kind at once so vague and so narrow, that they in fact treat the text "as a plaything of wax, or, rather, a half-inflated bladder, which you may press in what part you like, so it be but one part at a time, between your thumb and finger."

Idle attempts at reconciliation.

This question involves a train of consequences directly bearing on the entire view commonly taken of the nature and tenor of revelation; and the discussion, the more we consider it, must be admitted

Importance of the inquiry.

to form a remarkable epoch in the history of theological opinions—it involves a broad principle. There are still, however, some who do not seem as yet disposed to assign it this degree of *importance*, but think the difficulty sufficiently solved by the general remark, that revelation cannot really be inconsistent with physical truth, and there leave it without further question or examination. Here, however, a distinct point, *not* of abstract doctrine or spiritual mysteries, but connected with tangible matters of fact, is brought to light, by which a positive renunciation is demanded of that which has been hitherto held sacred. Here the disclosure is not, and cannot be, misrepresented as mere matter of speculation and theory, but comes with the claim of evidence and certainty. The question is one which stands apart from all mere abstract doctrinal controversies. It presents great undeniable physical truths, directly negativing what, previously to their discovery, had been received literally as a Divine announcement.

Compromise vain.

To make compromises, with the view of conciliating prejudices, is as derogatory to the claims of truth as it is sure to be unsuccessful in its object. All such concessions will still be suspected; all disguises

will equally fail in the object. The most impenetrable panoply in which to confront error, is the nakedness of truth.

The Mosaic narrative not historical.

The inevitable rejection of the *historical* character of the Mosaic narrative—a character so strenuously insisted on under older systems — cannot but be regarded as a marked feature in the theological and spiritual advance of the present age. It is not a step which can be denied, retracted, or obliterated; it is a substantial position gained and retained, and from which the advancing inquirer cannot be dislodged. And the more it is reflected on, and its consequences fairly appreciated and followed out, the more, I do not hesitate to express my opinion, will it be acknowledged as the characteristic feature and commencement of a great revolution in theological views.

Does not affect the inspiration of Scripture.

The objections felt on this subject are often traceable to the influence of supposed consequences from the belief in the *inspiration* of Scripture. But if this be insisted on in ever so literal a sense, it does not follow that a representation of the only kind intelligible to a particular age and people, might not be given by an inspired writer, though now discovered to be in its letter at variance with fact, and therefore

fairly to be understood as of a figurative or poetical nature, or by whatever equivalent designation we may choose to describe it. There are, however, some who entertain a strange and unaccountable prejudice against the adoption of such a designation. Yet they do not imagine the *inspiration* of the *parables* impugned because they are avowedly *fictions*. Where, then, is the difference, if an inspired narrative, once thought to be a *history*, is found to be a *parable*? When it is discovered that a narrative is such as *cannot* be regarded as *historical*, there remains the unavoidable alternative, either that it is simply *untrue*, or that it is *designedly fictitious*,—either to be rejected, in the one case, or, in the other, to be received as a fabulous, or allegorical, or mythical composition; or if those designations be objected to, it is for those who dislike them to propose a better.

Inconsistent prejudices.

Yet when this alternative is suggested with respect to the Mosaic creation, some persons of high orthodoxy consider this latter proposition as extremely objectionable and dangerous. It can only be inferred that they prefer the former.

Principle of rational interpretation.

Such are a few remarkable instances which distinctly evince the necessity for more rational con-

siderations, and more enlightened principles of interpretation, than the generality of believers are inclined to allow in the process of applying Scripture. In these instances every inquirer of common discernment cannot but see and own the necessity for such rational considerations in elucidating its true meaning. There are, nevertheless, those who exclaim against all such views, as involving the most dangerous admissions, and opening the door to every species of error. Yet, when closely examined, it is found that the broad principles referred to are no others than those which no theology beyond the lowest fanaticism can possibly dispense with.

The legitimate use of the rules of reasonable criticism can never be foreign to the investigation of truths professedly dependent on the right understanding of written records. It can only be the abuse and perversion of such criticism which can be fairly open to suspicion or reproach.

Formal and unreflecting use of Scripture.

But so wholly unreflecting is the ordinary mode of regarding the sacred volume, so little are professing believers given to think on, or examine, the grounds of their reception of its contents, and so narrow the prejudice on which, rather than on any rational con-

viction, their veneration for the Divine word is too commonly cherished,—and, we must add, so great the *ignorance* in which the young (and not *only* the young) are often studiously kept on these points—on which our divines are too often unwilling to allow others or even themselves the privilege of further enlightenment,—that upon the whole we can hardly be surprised at the prevalence at once of narrow and unworthy views of Christianity, and the dread felt by the many at any attempt to examine into its real doctrines in a more liberal spirit of free inquiry, or that the very agitation of any question tending, in the least, to impugn what has received the sanction of established authority and admitted consent, should be denounced as dangerous and heretical.

Objection from the *unity* of design of Scripture.

But the views thus combated as to the immediate and literal application of Scripture, whether in the more extreme or in the more modified sense, have been often defended on the plea—doubtless, in a certain sense, most true and just—that the Bible altogether is one harmonious whole—that all its parts, being no less than the dictation of one and the same Divine Spirit, cannot but conspire together to

one end and purport, and thus from all parts alike one system of truth and duty must result.

But it is no disparagement to this unity of Scripture to assert that we must view the whole with due reference to the *subordination and distinctness of its several parts;* and it will in no way follow from this view, that a precept or institution delivered under one dispensation, or one state of things, will at all apply under another and a different stage of the development of the Divine economy of grace.

But this is not contrary to distinctness of parts.

But even with some in whose estimation the extreme views just adverted to have deservedly sunk into discredit, a very similar class of opinions maintain their ground, which are but the legitimate consequences of the same literal rule, whose influence we trace so widely at the present day, if not in the same precise and rigid opinions, yet in the more widely spread, because more easy and acceptable, tenets of various modified forms derived from the same parent stock. These varieties of doctrine find a ready acceptance with those who, without much discriminating study of the Bible, preserve a deep reverence for it, and, without any very distinct views, adopt habitually a religion which is

an incongruous mixture of Christianity and Judaism.

Opposed to evangelical principles.

A more remarkable feature in the case, is that these Judaical views of religion, and this confusion and intermixture of the several dispensations with each other, should be so extensively adopted, not merely by the careless and formal reader of the Bible, but in an especial degree by those who *profess* to look at Christianity in a more enlightened sense, and who avowedly seek to receive it in no blind, formal manner, but in the entire spirit of its *evangelical* purity. With such professions, nothing surely can be more inconsistent than the adoption of the Old Testament law as the *basis* of gospel obligations.

Thus it happens, from a variety of conspiring causes and motives, that, among most parties of professing Christians at the present day, so unprepared are men's minds for entertaining any more distinct views of the nature or ground of Christian obligations, that the very mention of such a discussion of them, or the mere intimation of the groundlessness of their appeals to the authority of the Old Testament, is altogether startling and painful to their prepossessions; and, especially when these questions are found

to be mixed up with certain points of supposed practical duty and religious observance, which they have habitually followed, any more discriminating and explanatory view is repudiated, and men turn from the discussion with impatience, or even with disgust and offence.

Polemical spirit to be avoided.

Again, not less must exception be taken to the method and spirit in which such arguments are conducted. The discussions arising out of these questions are too often carried on in the manner of a polemical conflict, in which either combatant is merely bent upon urging such topics as may make most strongly for his own side,—bandying arguments, and parading a host of isolated *texts*. The truth, in any case, is surely not likely to be promoted by such a mode of proceeding. In the present instance, especially, the subject is one involving those *broader principles* which must be collected from a candid and rational inquiry into the historical characteristics of the several portions of the Divine dispensations recorded in the Bible, and by looking at passages in accordance with the entire argument of which they form a part. The whole question is really one of first principles, and ought not to be approached

in a controversial spirit, but will receive its solution to each inquirer's mind in proportion as he endeavours to look at Christianity as a whole, in its purely evangelical character as elicited by a rational examination of the New Testament.

Inconsistencies of biblical theories.

But in the professed maintenance of this entire subserviency to the very letter of Scripture, the most eminent Protestant champions have often betrayed a remarkable inconsistency with their own avowed principle. While professing to follow entirely the mere letter of the text, and the naked declarations of the Divine word, they have been really led by a favourite system, or foregone hypothesis, in entire accordance with which they have viewed the scriptural authorities, or *selected* and interpreted them just to suit their purpose, and support their adopted theory.

In strenuously upholding "the Bible, and the Bible only," as the sole religion of Protestants, they have, in fact, been led by other collateral authority, and, while seeming to maintain nothing but the pure declarations of the sacred writers, have, really, moulded and systematised the tenor of those declarations into a conformity with certain preconceived

systems, which they hold to be those of the true and orthodox faith, and to deny which they would contend to be little less than an entire denial of Divine truth, and a disloyalty to the word of God.

Protestant orthodoxism.

Many theologians of various Protestant schools, while they insist on receiving the volume of Scripture as the *sole* Divine word, nevertheless practically disparage that professed devotion to it, and even systematically defer, with a reverence scarcely inferior, to some *additional* authority of *human* interpreters who have acquired a prescriptive claim to the homage of their followers, and are implicitly listened to as the necessary guides to the *true meaning* of Scripture. And such writers, while they would probably be the first and most earnest to repudiate the idea of an ecclesiastical despotism, and would discard, as savouring of Popery, the notion of submission to ancient creeds and formularies, fathers and councils,—yet, in fact, accord just the same obedience to a particular school of modern commentators, and denounce, as sinful and blind heresies, the slightest departure from the views of their favourite preachers.

Here, then, we cannot fail to notice the striking

way in which extremes again meet. The Low Church orthodoxy, equally with the High, compels its votaries to bow down in blind homage before the idols it has erected. And such divines, while they repudiate the abomination of human traditions, and are zealous for the pure Word, yet set up their own or their teachers' comments as the only sound interpretation,—even as Jehu served the Lord and destroyed Baal, yet nevertheless sacrificed to the golden calves that were in Dan and Bethel.[1]

Preconceived theories.

And if even the system of Calvinism, and those allied to it, which seem to repose most entirely on the *letter* of Scripture, be critically examined, they will be found to be in reality founded on the *assumption of a theory* little warranted by that rule of implicit subserviency to the text, but derived wholly from other sources. If, for example, it were admitted that the letter of the text declares the Divine *will* to determine the salvation or damnation of men, yet to assert that this is the *sole* cause is to go beyond that letter, which might consist with *other* reasons determining that exercise of the Divine will.[2]

[1] 2 Kings x. [2] See Archbishop Whately's Charge, 1856, p. 41.

Bible religion.

The notion, once adopted, of the universal application of all parts of the Bible, considered as one book, is not easily dispelled. Having acquired the prescription of habitual acceptance, it has been applied, by those of various religious schools, in the most opposite senses, and in support of views of the most contradictory tendency. It is often adduced in support of some sort of system, or rather absence of all definite system, called "the religion of the Bible," which, it is alleged, is in fact no more than the religion of the wise and the good in all ages and of all races. Thus, passages may be cited indifferently from all parts of the history, the law, the moral books, the psalms, and the prophets, which—carefully abstracting from them all dogmatic peculiarities—may be made to announce one and the same great lesson of virtue and morality, of a rational Theism and sublime devotion,—the duties of the present, and the aspirations of the future, in which all will concur, and which constitute, indeed, an universal revelation which commends itself to the acceptance of all.

Biblical eclecticism.

This mode of extracting and collecting a number of detached passages and precepts, prohibitions and

maxims, indiscriminately brought together without regard to time, circumstances, parties, or dispensations, and omitting everything of more peculiar tendency, may, no doubt, accord very plausibly with a sort of abstract moral and religious system—a kind of religion, however, which the writers of the Bible manifestly never had in contemplation.

Yet this kind of *Biblical electicism* seems to recommend itself to many at the present day, with peculiar attraction, as it falls in easily with the desire to construct what is conceived to be a simple and intelligible scheme of religion, accordant with some favourite theories of moral and spiritual truth.

Often very narrow.

Yet such a scheme, while it professes great liberality and freedom of selection, may not unfrequently fix upon just those tenets or precepts which are most peculiarly marked and characterised by their adaptation to the peculiarly low and dark conceptions of those earlier ages for which the ancient dispensations were intended, but which, on that very account, are so peculiarly apt to be caught at, as being so grateful to human infirmity and ignorance in all times, and from which it is the very design of the later and

more perfect announcements of the New Testament to emancipate men.

And, in point of fact, it is found to be so. Inquirers and speculators on these subjects, in other respects sufficiently liberal, and even transcendental, in their views, have, by this very process, introduced into their systems, and insisted on, precisely those peculiar institutions and injunctions of the Old Testament which are as acceptable to human nature, in its seeking after a religion of sense and outward form (fitly called by the Apostle "carnal ordinances"), as they are adverse to the spiritual character of Christianity, which seeks to elevate men above these lower conceptions. And at the present day, as in some instances in past times, we find the Sabbatism and temporal retributions of the Old Testament among the avowed tenets of *Deism*.[1]

Distinction of dispensations in Scripture.

If the Bible is to be appealed to at all, it must surely be in the sense which its actual tenor, and the manifest designs and intentions of the several writers, will warrant. The actual historical purport of its different parts and portions must surely be taken

[1] See Appendix XVI.

into account. The expressions in which the Jewish lawgiver, or the prophets of the Old Testament, or the apostles and evangelists of the New, convey and clothe their doctrines, and the form of the precepts, whether given by them, or narrated as announced by Christ, must, historically speaking, be *first* considered with reference to the current forms of expression, and the existing ideas and prejudices of those they addressed, as well as to the entire design of the teaching either of the Founder of the religion or his followers, before any such more generalised application can be legitimately made of them.

It is one thing to frame a theoretical scheme of what we imagine either a scriptural religion or a code of moral instruction, whether it be of a Puritanical tendency on the one hand, or of a Theistic on the other—and to find support for it in an indiscriminate selection of passages taken from all parts of the varied contents of the Bible promiscuously heaped together,—quite another to pursue the simple matter-of-fact inquiry, *what were the actual* systems and forms of religious institution, of doctrinal truth, and practical teaching—whether accordant or not with our notions of reason or moral fitness—announced in

Inquiry into facts.

the different parts of those records,—which, on the mere face of the diversity of their historical dates, might be expected to exhibit great differences of character, even if they should be found connected by any common truths,—but which, when critically examined, may be found to exhibit the marks of a more specific design, and of a wise application to the wants and capacities of particular ages or nations?

Principle of adaptation.

Now, in reference to the peculiarities of these several systems or dispensations, especially the earlier, it may be proper to premise one consideration which affects the right interpretation of their whole design, —the admission of the principle that they were, in different ways, all professedly and avowedly characterised as being designed "*adaptations*" to the particular wants, capacities, conditions, and circumstances of the parties addressed. It is, in fact, this principle of *adaptation* to distinct ages and people, which seems to constitute the main clue to the explanation of those peculiarities, and without reference to which many parts of the Bible, and even the whole scheme, seem exposed to the most serious objections.

Suited to different races and ages.

Objections.

It cannot be denied that, in the Old Testament history and institutions, we find repeated instances of what cannot be reconciled to our ideas of moral right, or to what is now known to be truth and matter of fact. But if, in any declaration or institution, we find that which now appears to be untrue, unjust, unworthy of supreme goodness, or at variance with the highest standard of purity and holiness, it seems impossible to accept it as really Divine. To suppose God to sanction, or even tolerate, untruth, immorality, or iniquity, for however high an ulterior purpose, would be a contradiction to His nature and a denial of His perfections.

Adaptation recognised in Scripture.

Thus the very idea of "adaptation" has been considered, by many, in itself objectionable. Nevertheless the principle rests upon the express representations of the Bible itself, which professedly contains the account of *progressive disclosures* of Divine truth, partially and gradually made known in accordance with the condition and wants, and capacity to receive instruction, of those to whom they were addressed, who were mostly in the lowest stage of advance and enlightenment, and to whom anything higher would have been absolutely unintelligible, and would have

been utterly rejected unless conformed in some degree to their prepossessions.

We can, however, judge of the representations made in any part of the Bible, solely from its own statements. The error lies in attempting to judge absolutely of these things by *our* standard; and the difficulty arises solely from imagining these representations addressed *to us*. If we look to the actual case of the sacred writers, it is manifest that, to *their* apprehensions of the Divine nature or attributes, the various declarations, and views of the Divine dealings, which they disclose, involved no suspicion of inconsistency or contradiction.

Application to Christianity.

If we admit the principle of such adaptation to past ages and a peculiar people, it becomes the more manifestly inconsistent to suppose these things intended to apply to other ages and other people differently circumstanced,—still less to apply universally, or to ourselves, enjoying, as we profess to do, the better instruction and higher illumination of Christianity. Yet such error is too common, from the mere want of due attention to the actual facts of the case, and discrimination as to the distinct nature of the dispensation under which we live.

# ESSAY III.

## THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

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### § I.—THE PRIMEVAL DISPENSATIONS.

All older dispensations temporary.

If we are to take the statements of the Bible according to the representations which the sacred writers themselves give us of their intention, we must fairly regard the general nature, character, and connection of the successive Divine dispensations recorded in the Bible as they are briefly described by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews,—as announcements in various measures and "portions," and under various "forms" or "aspects,"[1] made in times past to the fathers by the prophets. And this, we readily perceive, fully accords with what we collect in detail from the writings of the Old Testament, and

[1] πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως.—Heb. i. 1.

affords the only simple and satisfactory clue to the interpretation of them, and the reconciliation of the apparent differences or contradictions between them.

The view presented to us is that of successive revelations, systems, covenants, laws, given to different individuals, families, or nations, containing gradual, progressive, and partial developments of spiritual truth, and intimations of the Divine will for their guidance, accompanied with peculiar positive institutions, adapted to the ideas of the age and the condition of the parties to whom they were vouchsafed.

Thus, peculiar revelations are represented as having been made in earlier ages—each distinct from the other, though in some instances including repetitions of the same declarations—to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, and, lastly, to the Israelites—first by Moses, afterwards by a succession of prophets—as well as in some instances to other people, as, *e.g.*, to the Ninevites (if the book of Jonah be regarded as historical),—while, *in contradistinction to all these*, "in *these last days*" (an expression well understood by the Jews as equiva-

lent to the final dispensation or age), it is explicitly declared, God hath spoken *unto us* by his Son in an universal, permanent, and perfect dispensation. The earlier and more partial, therefore, in the language of the apostle (which, addressed as it was to the Hebrews, becomes of far greater force with reference to the Gentiles), were *not* made "to *us*," nor designed "*for us*." Nevertheless, even in these days, it is important to trace the history and character of these former dispensations, in order more fully to elucidate the distinct nature and independence of the last; and especially to remove prevalent misconceptions from a subject which, however plain when historically and rationally considered, has been involved in much difficulty from gratuitous and often visionary theories of a doctrinal kind.

View of primeval religion.

When we consider the very imperfect intimations —often mere hints and allusions—given in the Hebrew records as to these early religious institutions and the design of them, as well as the obvious and wide differences in the circumstances of those people and times from our own, the discerning reader at once sees how little they can have been intended to be understood as containing any permanent elements

of an universal religion coeval with man, as seems to have been sometimes imagined. In the plain terms of the narrative we discover nothing of the kind; and in the comment on it which the New Testament supplies, we have direct assurance to the contrary.

In general, the only common principle we can discover in these records, is, that the servants of God in those ages are described as being accepted in walking each according to the light vouchsafed to him, while in other respects we see peculiar institutions and announcements having reference to the peculiar ends and purposes of the dispensations, specially adapted to the condition of those to whom they were addressed. Thus we trace from the first the approach to God through sacrifices, offerings, and formal services.

Supposed primeval Sabbath.

Some have imagined, from the figurative account of the Divine "rest" after the creation, that there was a primeval institution of the Sabbath, though certainly *no precept* is recorded as having been given to man to keep it up. But since, from the irreconcilable contradictions disclosed by geological discovery, the whole narrative of the six days' creation

cannot now be regarded by any competently informed person *as historical*[1], the *historical* character of the distinction conferred on the seventh day falls to the ground along with it.

The disclosure of the true physical history of the origin of the existing state of the earth, by modern geological research, as shown in a previous Essay, *entirely overthrows the supposed historical character of the narrative of the six days, and, by consequence, that respecting the consecration of the seventh day along with it*, and thus subverts entirely the whole foundation of the belief in an alleged primeval Sabbath, coeval with the world and with man, which has been so deeply mixed up with the prepossessions of a large class of modern religionists. Yet, without reference to this consideration, even long before the geological discoveries were known, some of the best commentators have regarded the passage as proleptical, or anticipatory.

Other ceremonial distinctions.

Afterwards we find the distinction of clean and unclean animals introduced, and the prohibition

[1] The *evidence* in support of this conclusion is briefly described above, in Essay II., and will be found fully discussed in my work, *On the Connection of Natural and Divine Truth*, 1838; in my article,

of eating blood, in the covenant with Noah,[1] of which the Sabbath formed no part; nor can we find any indication of it in the history of the other patriarchs,—a point particularly dwelt upon by the early Christian divines, to whom any such idea of a primeval obligation was evidently unknown, and who adopted the belief of the Jews of their age, in interpreting their Scriptures.[2] Some modern commentators have dwelt on the mention of the division of time by weeks[3] in several parts of the early

"Creation," in Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Bib. Lit.*; and *The Unity of Worlds*, Essays II. and III.

[1] Gen. ix. 1.

[2] Justin Martyr (*Dial. c. Trypho.* 236, 261) says, "The patriarchs were justified before God not keeping Sabbaths," and "from Abraham originated circumcision, and from Moses the Sabbath," &c. Irenæus (iv. 20) and Tertullian (*adv. Jud.* ii. 4) both declare that "Abraham, without circumcision, and without observance of Sabbaths, believed in God," &c. Eusebius (*Hist.* i. 4) says, "The patriarchs did not observe circumcision, or Sabbath, or distinctions of meats, any more than we do. These were first appointed by Moses." To the same effect, also, see Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* vii. 6.

[3] The early adoption (as Gen. xxix. 27, 28; Job ii. 13, &c.) of the division of time into *weeks* may be obviously and rationally derived from the simple consideration that, in a rude state, among people whose calendar demands no very nice adjustments, the first periodical division of time which naturally obtains is that of lunar months, while those conspicuous phenomena, the phases or quarters of the moon, correspond to a week nearly enough for the common purposes of such nations. And as to shorter subdivisions, though the recurrence of the lunar period in about 29½ days was incompatible with any *exact* sub-

Mosaic history,—in the history of Noah,[1] &c., and, as they have also *imagined*, even in an expression in

division, yet the nearest whole number of days which could be subdivided into shorter periods, would be either 30 or 28, of which the latter would, of course, be adopted, as admitting of division into 4, corresponding nearly to the phases or quarters of the moon. Each of these would palpably correspond to about a week; and in a period of about $5\frac{1}{2}$ lunations the same phases would return very nearly to the same days of the week. In order to connect the reckoning by weeks with the lunar month, we find that all ancient nations observed some peculiar solemnities to mark the day of the *new moon*. Accordingly, in the Mosaic law, the same thing was also enjoined (Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11, &c.); though it is worthy of remark that, while *particular observances* are here enjoined, the idea of celebrating the new moon in *some way* is alluded to as if already familiar to them.

The prevalence of this division by weeks among Eastern nations, from a very remote period, is attested by various ancient writers. Dio Cassius ascribes the invention of it to the Egyptians, and assigns the origin of the planetary names of the days. (*Hist. Rom.* xxxvii. 18, 19.) The application of the *names* of the planets to the days originated in the *astrological* notion, that each planet in order presided over the hours of the day. Arranging the planets in the order of their distances from the earth, on the Geocentric system, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon, then, *e.g.*, *Saturn* presided over the first hour of Saturday, and, assigning each planet to an hour in succession, the 22d hour will fall to Saturn again, the 23d to Jupiter, the 24th to Mars, and thus the first hour of the next day would fall to the *Sun*, and so on. Oldendorf found the weekly division of time in the interior of Africa. (Jahn, *Archæol. Bib.*, art. "Week.") The Brahmins also have the week distinguished by the planetary names. (*Life of Galileo*, 12; Laplace, *Précis de l'Hist. d'Astron.* 16.) The Peruvians divide lunar months into halves and quarters, by the phases of the moon, but have no names for the days, and besides have a period of nine days, the

[1] Gen. vii. 4, &c.

the account of Abel's sacrifice.[1] Yet it by no means follows that, because the historian adopts a particular

approximate third part of a lunation, thus showing the common origin of both. (Garcilasso, *Hist. of the Incas.* in Taylor's *Nat. Hist. of Society,* i. 291, 292.) As also the Romans had their "Nundinæ," or ninth day, which was a holiday even to slaves. The Greek lunar month, of alternately 29 and 30 days, was divided into decades of days.

On the other hand, the Mexicans have periods of five and of thirteen days, with names to each day (Norman on *Yucatan,* i. 85, and *Trans. of American Ethnog. Soc.* i. 58.) The New Zealanders have a year of thirteen lunar months, each day of which has a name, though no distinction of weeks. (Captain Mundy, *Antipodes,* ii. 251.)

In a word, the division of time into weeks appears to have been peculiar to two portions of the ancient world, India and Egypt, from the latter of which it was probably adopted by the Israelites, as from the former by some other Eastern nations. It was wholly unknown to China, to aboriginal Europe, or to America (Catlin, ii. 234), or any other part of the world—facts opposed to the idea of any universal primitive tradition.

Allusions to a sanctity ascribed to the seventh day by the early Greek poets—such as the ἑβδομάτῃ δ' ἔπειτα κατήλυθεν ἱερὸν ἦμαρ of Homer, and like expressions of Callimachus, Hesiod, &c.—are quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.* v.), and expressly described by him to have been derived from the Jews, with whose scriptures, by that time so widely diffused, so many parallelisms are found in the classic authors.

Generally, however, the universal superstition of the sacredness of the number 7, combined with the equally common propensity to attach sanctity to particular periods and days, are sufficient elements out of which such ideas would naturally take their rise.

Among the ancient Romans, festivals were held in honour of Saturn, with a reference to commemorating the Saturnian or Golden Age; and with this idea it was unlawful, on the day sacred to Saturn, to go out to war (Macrobius, lib. i., *Saturn.* c. 16), and it was held unlucky to

[1] Gen. iv. 3.

mode of reckoning, it was *therefore* used by the people or in the age of which he is writing; but, were it so, this would not imply the institution of the Sabbath.

In all the accounts of the early dispensations, religious truths are conveyed under figures, and obligations enforced by motives, specially adapted to the capacities and wants of the parties addressed. Thus, temporal prospects are always held out as the *immediate* sanctions; and the *mode* of announcement adopted is always that in which God is represented as vouchsafing to enter into *a covenant* with his Covenants.

commence a journey, or undertake any business,—a superstition alluded to by Tibullus (*Eleg.* i. 3, v. 18):—

"Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem."

What particular feast is here referred to there is nothing to show. The supposition of some of his commentators, that it meant the seventh day of the week, is wholly gratuitous. But if it were so, the idea would be naturally and obviously borrowed from the Jews, whose customs, especially the Sabbath, are so frequently alluded to by the Roman writers, and, from their wide dispersion, must have been generally familiar, as, in fact, we learn from the boast of Josephus (*adv. Ap.* ii.) and of Philo, that "there is no place where the Sabbath is not known," and the testimony of Theophilus Antiochus (lib. ii. *ad Arist.*) to the same effect, as well as others often cited, which show the strict preservation of the observance among the scattered Jews; and it may possibly have been conformed to by others, or the occasion laid hold of as convenient for other purposes, as, *e. g.*, we are told by Suetonius (lib. xxxii.), "Diogenes grammaticus disputare sabbatis Rhodi solitus."

creatures. The form is always that of a *stipulation* of certain *conditions* to be fulfilled, and certain blessings or punishments to be awarded as they are fulfilled or not, and these conditions always of a precise, formal, positive kind, not implying merely natural moral obligations. The spirit of all these covenants was that of minute positive ordinances and distinctions—"Touch not, taste not, handle not,"[1]—involving a ground and motive of obedience precisely adapted to the very infancy of the human race. Such was the very covenant with Adam in Paradise: "Eat not of the tree, or thou shalt die." The same idea of a covenanted stipulation of *positive* observances, characterises all the succeeding announcements, from the covenant of circumcision with Abraham down to the more detailed and complete scheme of the Mosaic law. In all these systems the prominent feature was the practice of sacrifice, implying the idea of propitiating a wrathful Deity by the shedding of blood.

Primeval precepts not obligatory as such.

Under these early and imperfect dispensations, if we only reflect on the marriages of the sons and daughters of Adam, or on the polygamy of the

[1] Col. ii. 21.

patriarchs, we must own that it is idle to look for any great principles of universal *moral* application, as has been imagined by some; who, for instance, find authority for capital punishment in the precept[1] given to Noah,[2] or for tithes in the example of Melchizedec.[3] So far from perceiving any support for the idea that, because a precept or institution was from the beginning, it was *therefore* designed to be of universal and perpetual obligation, on the contrary, we rather see in its very antiquity a strong presumption that it was of a nature suited and intended only for the earliest stage of the religious development of man. One instance, indeed, is sometimes appealed to in support of a reference to *primitive institutions*—the argument of Christ with respect to marriage, "*from the beginning* it was not so;"[4] but the whole context shows that this was purely an argument with the Jews *from their own belief,* and not involving any abstract principle, or that the mere *antiquity* of any institution proved its general application or obligation.

[1] That is, assuming it to be a *precept* at all. It is understood by many, and with much reason, to be a mere proverbial or prudential maxim, just as in Matt. xxvi. 52.

[2] Gen. ix. 6. [3] Gen. xiv. 20. [4] Matt. xix. 8.

Again, some interpret the expression,[1] "the law was *added*," as if it implied some previous law; but, from the context, it is clearly described as "added" (προσετέθη), not to any previous *law*, but to "*the promise*"—that Divine assurance of a Saviour, of which, apart from all these peculiarities of "covenants," we trace all along the announcement,—which was before these covenants, and to which "the fathers looked *as not transitory*."[2] Christianity, by fulfilling the *promise*, supersedes all previous imperfect dispensations (such is the express tenor of the argument in Gal. iii.), itself emphatically a "*New* dispensation,"[3] the very reverse of a *recurrence* to a primitive religion, as fancied by some. The patriarchs, and especially Abraham, are set forth as examples of *faith in the promise*; and in this respect Christian believers are called children of Abraham,[4] but manifestly not in the sense of their *retrograding* to an older and less perfect state of things. The whole tenor of the Divine revelations is clearly stamped with the character of *advance*.

The promise.

[1] Gal. iii. 19. [2] *Thirty-nine Articles*, art. vii.; Heb. xi. 13.
[3] διαθήκη. Heb. viii. 13. See *infrà*, § iv. [4] Gal. iii. 7.

## § II.—THE JUDAICAL LAW.

Early part of Old Testament introductory to the Law.

THE manifest design of the book of Genesis was *not* to teach *us* a primitive or universal religion, but to form an *introduction to the Law* for the Jews. It has been well observed that "to understand Genesis we must begin with Exodus." From the actual history and circumstances of the people we can best appreciate the sense in which their ancient records are to be understood; and when we examine them, we find that those events in the *previous* history are always selected and enlarged upon, which have a direct reference to points in the *subsequent* institutions, or which were *anticipations of the Law*, or the rudiments out of which its ordinances were framed.[1]

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[1] I have throughout the present argument *assumed* the received view of the Old Testament as a continuous historical account of the Israelites and their institutions. That assumption, however, it is perfectly well known, is, in the opinion of some of the best critical scholars, open to much question; in fact, on a discriminating examination of various parts of the narrative as it stands, the difficulties which present themselves are such as can only be accounted for (in the opinion of some acute critics) by supposing it a compilation of fragmentary documents of various ages, put together without much regard to their historical connexion or authenticity, but with a religious design. My

Thus, the narrative of the six days' creation, first announced in the Decalogue, and afterwards amplified in Genesis (in accordance with what has been already observed), can *now* only be regarded as a figurative mode, suited to their apprehensions, of enforcing on the Jews the institution of the Sabbath —the day of completion of the work of creation, on which the Creator rested and was refreshed.[1] And in like manner the institutions of primeval worship (already adverted to)—the sacrifices, the distinctions of clean and unclean animals, the prohibition of blood, and afterwards the appointment of circumcision—the choice of a peculiar people, the promise of Canaan—form the prominent topics, as exhibiting

present object, however, does not demand any introduction of these topics. If they were admitted, no doubt the inferences in this Essay would follow *à fortiori;* indeed, much of the discussion would be superseded altogether. But I prefer, for the general reader, to reason on the *admitted* view of the case, and not to mix up my conclusions with assertions which might be disputed.

In immediate connexion with the views here alluded to, some very important critical elucidations of many parts of the Old Testament system, especially as bearing on Christianity, will be found in an acute critical work, *A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Christianity,* by R. W. Mackay, M.A. (London, 1854), though I am far from assenting to *all* the author's opinions. Also many valuable elucidations, the result, evidently, of extensive reading and critical research, will be found in a work entitled *Time and Faith,* London, 1857, 2 vols.

[1] Exod. xxxi. 17.

the first rudiments of the Mosaic religion, and approximations towards the system of the Law.

Separation of the peculiar people.

The object of the Law was declared to be, in the first instance, to *separate* the people of Israel, by peculiar marks and badges, from all other nations, as a people *chosen* for the high ends and purposes of the Divine counsels.[1] This was to be effected especially by such distinctions as those of circumcision, the prohibition of intermarriages or any participation with idolaters, and by all their exclusive usages and ceremonies.

The Sabbath a badge of separation.

Among these the chief was the marked singularity of the Sabbath, which, along with the Passover, was appointed earlier than the rest of the Law,[2] and was enjoined expressly "for a perpetual *covenant*," and as "a *sign* between God and the *children of Israel* for ever,"[3] which they were always to *remember* to keep up. And the same idea is repeated in many other passages, all showing both the exclusive an-

[1] See especially Exod. xix. 5, xxxi. 13–17; Deut. xiv. 1, xxvi. 16; Ezek. xx. 9–12.

[2] This is doubted by some. Thus Mede computes that the march of the Israelites out of Egypt commenced on a Sabbath, and hence argues that it was not yet instituted. (*On Sabbath*, p. 239.)

[3] Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.

nouncement and peculiar object and application of the institution to the people of Israel always mentioned among the most essential characteristics of the Law.[1] And this is further manifest in the constant association of this observance with others of the like peculiar and positive nature,—as with reverencing the sanctuary,[2] keeping the ordinances,[3] solemnising the new moons[4] and other feasts.[5] And, obviously with the same view, it was expressly made one of the most special and primary obligations of proselytes who joined themselves to the Lord, as "taking hold of the covenant" thereby.[6]

Nature of observance.

As to the nature and mode of the observance, it consisted in a rigid cessation of every kind of labour, as we see in the express literal precepts against kindling fire,[7] or preparing food.[8] A man was put to death for gathering sticks.[9] Buying and selling were also unlawful.[10] They were not to follow their own pleasure, nor speak their own words.[11]

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[1] As, particularly, Ezek. xx. 10; Neh. ix. 14, &c.
[2] Lev. xix. 30.
[3] Ezek. xlv. 7.
[4] Isa. i. 13, lxvi. 23.
[5] Hos. ii. 11.
[6] Isa. lvi. 6.
[7] Exod. xxxv. 3.
[8] Exod. xvi. 5, 22.
[9] Num. xv. 32.
[10] Neh. x. 31.
[11] Isa. lviii. 13.

To these a multitude of more precise injunctions were added by the traditions of the Rabbis,[1] such as the prohibition of travelling more than twelve miles —afterwards contracted to one mile, and called a Sabbath day's journey,—and not only buying and selling, but any kind of pecuniary transaction even for charitable purposes, or so much as touching money.[2]

Sabbatical year.

We see also the extension of the same peculiar idea of a seventh period of rest, in the institution of the *Sabbatical Year*, or the injunction of a *fallow*, or cessation of tillage for the land, every seventh year. Not only were the labours of agriculture suspended, but even the spontaneous productions of the earth were to be given to the poor, the traveller, and the wild animals.[3] This prohibition, however, did not extend to other labours or trades, which were still carried on. There was, however, in this year, an extraordinary time devoted to the hearing of the Law read through.[4] As Moses predicted,[5] this institution was afterwards much neglected.[6]

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[1] *Time and Faith*, i. 93.

[2] See Vitringa, *De Synagogâ*, translated by Bernard, p. 76.

[3] See Lev. xxv. 1-7; Deut. xv. 1-10.

[4] See Deut. xxxi. 10.

[5] Lev. xxvi. 34.

[6] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

Closely connected with this was the observance of the year following seven sabbatic years (*i.e.* the fiftieth year), called the year of Jubilee.

The observance of the Sabbath is always expressed and regarded not as of *one day in seven*, but specifically of *the seventh day of the week* as such, in commemoration of the rest after the creation,[1] though in one respect, also, it is afterwards urged as reminding the Israelites of their deliverance out of Egypt.[2]

Adaptation of the Law to the genius of the people of Israel

These distinctive institutions and peculiarities constituted at once their security and unity as a people, and supplied their motives of obedience. The Law throughout is a series of adaptations *to them* and their national character and position; yet

[1] The Jewish Rabbis have always understood the institution of the Sabbath to belong *to the particular day* of the cessation of the creation, enjoined on the people of Israel, as they say, "that they might fasten in their minds the belief that the world had a beginning, which is a thread that draws after it all the foundations of the Law or principles of religion."—*Rabbi Levi of Barcelona*, quoted by Patrick, on Exod. xix. The same idea occurs in a Jewish form of prayer, quoted also by Patrick. See Abp. Sumner's *Records of Creation*, i. 87.

The early Christian writers all regard the institution as wholly peculiar to the Israelites. Justin Martyr, in particular, expresses himself pointedly to the effect that "it was given to them on account of their lawlessness (*ἀνομίαν*) and hardness of heart."—*Dial. cum Tryph.* 235.

[2] Deut. v. 15.

by many theologians it is, very strangely and unaccountably, spoken of as something general, as "a preliminary education of the human race," as a part of the general system of instruction and advance of mankind. But the plain history discloses nothing but the separation of one single people for a specific purpose.

We see continued exemplifications of wise adaptation to the Jewish national mind and state of progress in the entire *mode* of the delivery of the Law, amid terrors, signs, and wonders, and especially in the announcement of the Decalogue from Sinai, while its consignment to tables of stone is expressly stated to be for a memorial or "testimony"[1] to the covenant, of which these precepts constituted some of the more primary stipulations, but are in no other way distinguished in character from the rest of the body of laws. And throughout the whole Law we trace equal adaptations in the form and manner of the precepts and injunctions—all minute and literal, not rising to any broad principles, which the Israelites at that time would have been incapable of comprehending.

[1] Exod. xxxi. 18, xxxiv. 29.

Ceremonial and moral law.

The distinction adopted by many modern divines, between the "*ceremonial*" and the "*moral*" law, appears nowhere in the books of Moses. No one portion or code is there held out as comprising the rules of *moral* obligation distinct and apart from those of a *positive* nature. In the low stage of advancement of the Israelites, such a distinction would have been unintelligble to them; and "the Law" is always spoken of, both in the Old Testament and in the New, as a *whole*, without reference to any such classification; and the obligations of all parts of it are indiscriminately urged on the same grounds, and as of the same kind.

The moral law not the Decalogue.

In particular, what is termed the moral law is certainly in no way peculiarly to be identified with the Decalogue, as some have strangely imagined. Though moral duties are specially enjoined in many places of the Law, yet the Decalogue most assuredly does not contain *all* moral duties, even by remote implication, and on the widest construction. *It totally omits many such*, as *e.g.*, beneficence, truth, justice, temperance, control of temper, and others; and some moral precepts omitted here are introduced in other places. But many moral duties are hardly

recognised; *e.g.*, it is difficult to find any positive prohibition of drunkenness in the Law. In one passage only an indirect censure seems to be implied.[1] The prohibition in respect to the priests,[2] and the Nazarite[3] vow, were peculiar cases.

Equally in the Decalogue and the rest of the Law, we find precepts referring to what are properly moral duties, scattered and intermixed with those of a positive and formal kind, and in no way distinguished from them in authority or importance; but both connected with the peculiarities of the dispensation, expressed in a form, accompanied with sanctions, and enforced by motives precisely adapted to the character and capacity of the people, and such as formed part of the exact stipulations of the covenant.

Grounds of obedience.

Practical duties were urged more generally on the Israelites, in some passages,[4] on the consideration of the national blessings they enjoyed, in others on more particular grounds—such as long life promised as the motive for filial obedience,[5] the recompense for

[1] Deut. xxix. 19. [2] Lev. x. 9. [3] Deut. vi. 3.
[4] As, *e.g.*, Deut. xi. 21, 22, iv. 31, &c. [5] Exod. xx. 12.

beneficence and equity,[1] the appeal to the dread of Divine vengeance,[2] and the remembrance of benefits conferred. In general, their reward was to be found in obedience: to keep the statutes and ordinances was to be "their wisdom and their righteousness;" and the great maxim and promise was, "He that doeth these things shall live in them."[3]

Law adapted to human nature.

The law conformed to many points of human infirmity. It offered splendid rites and ceremonies to attract popular reverence, and wean the people from their proneness to the gross ceremonies of idolatry. It indulged the disposition, so powerfully inherent in human nature, to observe "days, and times, and seasons," by the Sabbaths and feasts, and by occasional fasts—originally only a symbol of ordinary mourning, but afterwards invested with a religious character.[4] It commended avenging and sanguinary zeal, especially in the punishment of blasphemers.[5] It sanctioned the "*lex talionis*"—"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth"[6]—that most perfect idea of retributive

[1] Prov. xix. 17; Ps. xli. 1, xxxvii. 25, &c.
[2] Exod. xxiv. 17; Deut. iv. 24; Isa. lxvi. 16; Deut. iv. 31.
[3] Deut. iv. 6, vi. 25; Lev. xviii. 5.
[4] Isa. lviii. 5; Joel ii. 12.
[5] Lev. xxiv. 14; Deut. xiii. 9.
[6] Exod. xxi. 23, 24.

justice to the uncivilised mind; and in general it connected the idea of *punishment* with that of *vengeance* and *satisfaction*,—the most congenial to a barbarous apprehension. If it restricted marriages within certain degrees of kindred, it at least connived at polygamy,[1] and allowed a law of divorce suited "to the hardness of their hearts."[2] On the other hand, it visited the violation of conjugal fidelity in the severest manner—punishing fornication in married persons with death by stoning.[3] It fully recognised and upheld slavery.[4]

The Law altogether was established with a regard to the infirmity and blindness of the people, "*in consideration to transgressions.*"[5] It was altogether a dispensation marked by physical influences and external manifestations; and characteristically enjoined

The Law carnal.

[1] Exod. xxi. 10; Deut. xxi. 15; Judg. viii. 30, &c. Besides the repeated mention of polygamy in the Old Testament, it is referred to by Josephus as practised in his time, and still later by Justin Martyr, who says that the Jewish doctors allowed a man four or five wives. See Neander's *Life of Christ*, transl. p. 252.

[2] Matt. xix. 8.

[3] Deut. xxii. 22; Lev. xx. 10.

[4] Lev. xxv. 44, &c.

[5] Gal. iii. 19. Though the meaning of this expression has been differently viewed, this appears to me to be the proper force of the adverb χάριν here used by the apostle. From its etymology it must be supposed to imply "because of" in *a favourable* or *indulging* sense. It seems to correspond to πρός in Matt. xix. 8.

bodily observances, meats and drinks, outward purifications, "carnal ordinances," not as adjuncts, but as essentials. The religious festivals were expressly to be observed with literal *feasting*.[1]

Anthropomorphic representations of God.

While it prohibited idolatry, it represented the Deity under human similitudes, with human passions and bodily members, as, *e. g.*, weary and resting from His work, angry, repenting, and jealous of other gods, and designated more particularly as "Jehovah," the national "God of Israel." It is not one of the least remarkable of these anthropomorphisms, that (as in former instances) the disclosure of the Divine purposes is made under the figure of Jehovah entering into a *covenant* with his people,—an idea specially adapted to a nation of the lowest moral capacity. All points of duty were proposed under the form of precise stipulations (just as in other times religious vows, temperance pledges, subscriptions to creeds, &c. have been adopted), to keep a stronger hold on those incapable of higher motives. The immediate appeal to Divine sanctions sensibly present, and the enforcement of moral duties under the form of a

The covenant.

[1] See Deut. xiv. 26, xxvii. 7; Neh. viii. 10, 12.

positive engagement, were precisely calculated to influence those who had no apprehension of pure principles of moral obligation, or of a higher spiritual service.

Temporal retribution.

The *covenant*, as such, was entirely under the sanction of temporal rewards and punishments,—the enjoyment of the land of Canaan with its fruits, plenty, prosperity, and long life.[1] The blessings and cursings were placed in sensible contrast before the gross apprehensions of the people;[2] the punishment of sin was to be by diseases, by famine, pestilence, and the sword, and by subjection to their enemies.[3] The denunciations of the Law are constantly repeated in the prophets,[4] and are throughout confirmed by repeated instances in their history, repeated special visitations, terminated at length by national rejection.

Retribution to posterity; and national.

Again, obedience was to be rewarded, and sin to be visited, by blessings or judgments on the *posterity* of the offender[5]—not merely in the sense of the

[1] Exod. xx. 12, xxiii. 26; Lev. xxv. 17, xxvi. 3; Numb. xiv. 20; Deut. v., vi., vii. *passim*, i. 35.

[2] Deut. xxviii., xxix.

[3] Exod. xv. 26; Lev. xxvi. 16, 25; Deut. vii. 15, xxvi. 7, &c.

[4] Isa. li. 19; Jer. xxix. 18; Ezek. vi. 11, xiv. 21, &c.

[5] Exod. xx. 5.

ordinary consequences of good or bad conduct in the parents naturally influencing the fortunes of the children, but by what were expressly represented as peculiar providential interpositions. And in connexion with this was another striking peculiarity of the covenant,—that obedience and disobedience were both regarded as *national*, for which *national* rewards and judgments were to be awarded, the *whole people, in the aggregate*, being represented as possessing a *collective* and common responsibility. These peculiarities were obviously connected with the absence of those higher motives and sanctions which would be derived from the doctrine of a future state, which clearly *formed no part of the covenant*, even supposing it true that it was believed by some pious and enlightened individuals, and in later times hinted at by the prophets.

The maintenance of the dispensation the rule of right.

We may observe further, that throughout the Old Testament, in all narrated events, and representations of the conduct of individual actors in them, everything is regulated and estimated, not according to abstract *moral* principles, not by any standard of *moral* merit or demerit, such as we should adopt at the present day, but always according to the bearing

of the event, or the conduct of the individual, in question, upon the fortunes of the chosen people of Jehovah, upon the advancement of His cause, the support of His law, the bringing about of His counsels, and the discomfiture of His enemies. It is only on this principle that we gain any clue to the *religious* import attached to a number of events in the history —to many of the details of the wars and policy of the judges and kings,—or to the praise often awarded to individual conduct otherwise the most equivocal or even highly blamable, or the condemnation of parties not otherwise apparently offenders. Such difficulties, of constant occurrence, can only be solved by the principle that, under that system, *whatever forwarded the advancement of the Mosaic dispensation, the dominion of Jehovah, was* RIGHT; *whatever opposed or hindered it,* WRONG.

The obligations of the Law were strongly declared to be *perpetual*,[1] and the covenant *everlasting*— expressions which cannot now be taken literally. Again, one of its most marked features was, that its privileges might at all times be extended to strangers

Extension of privileges.

[1] As, *e.g.*, Exod. xxxi. 17; Lev. xvi. 34, xxiv. 8; 2 Kings xvii. 37, &c.

by their undergoing the initiatory rite. This was, in later ages, extensively realised.[1]

The prophecies.

The prophecies of the future extension of the Mosaic religion might, in a first sense, apply literally to this extension of proselytism—the coming in of remote nations to the Jewish church and worship, resorting to its temple, adopting its rites and offerings, and keeping its festivals and Sabbaths,—as we know was in fact largely fulfilled before the introduction of the Gospel.[2]

These predictions are, however, also figuratively interpreted of the spread of the Gospel, and the glories of the spiritual Zion. If so, *all* the particulars in the description must be interpreted by the *same* analogy. If Israel and the temple be metaphorical, then the sacrifices, new moons, and Sabbaths[3] must be so likewise. If these latter are taken literally, we can only understand the whole literally, or we violate all rules of interpretation and analogy.

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[1] See Exod. xii. 48; comp. with Isa. lvi. 6, and Deut. xxix. 11.

[2] Isa. lvi. 3, lxvi. 11, 12, 19–23; Micah iv. 1; Zech. viii. 21; Amos ix. 11; comp. Acts ii. 5, &c.

[3] Especially as in Isaiah lxvi. 23. See note in § IV. p. 141.

More spiritual principles.

The precision and formality of the *Law* were in some degree extended and spiritualised by the *prophets*.[1] The weightier matters of the Law are pre-eminently insisted on by them. The words of Ezekiel[2] have been understood as positively abrogating the punishment of the posterity for the sins of the father; and Isaiah[3] strongly decries the sacrifices and Sabbaths. They also gave intimations that the Law was to come to an end, or rather to be superseded by a better and more spiritual covenant.[4] Malachi, the last of the prophets, connects the two dispensations—looking backwards to Moses, and forwards to Christ and his forerunner.[5]

John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was the minister of an intermediate or preparatory dispensation. He accordingly recognised all existing obligations, but reproved hypocrisy and formality, and urged repentance and its practical fruits.[6] He more especially announced the kingdom of heaven as at hand; and his mission, as more fully expounded by the fourth evangelist, was

[1] As 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. xv.; Hosea vi. 6; Micah vi. 8, ix. 13, &c.

[2] Ezek. xviii. 3.

[3] Isa. i. 13, &c.

[4] Isa. ii. 2; Jer. xxxi. 31; Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

[5] Mal. iv. 2–6.

[6] Luke iii. 10–14; Matt. ii. 7.

to point to Jesus as "the Christ," who should bring that kingdom in,[1] "the Lamb of God," who should "take away the sin of the world."

## Note on § II.

Some views have been broached by critical writers, which throw light on the subject of the legal sacrifices, and the whole nature of the Law. Thus it is, in the first instance, contended that the general idea of *human sacrifice* was clearly one familiar to the apprehensions of those who wrote and those who originally read the Old Testament. This is supported by the well-known instances of Abraham and of Jephthah (which was clearly a sacrifice according to Lev. xxvii. 29, and was so understood by Josephus), and the interpretation of which as a devotion of his daughter merely to perpetual virginity is treated by Ewald (*Hist. of Israel*, ii.) as wholly untenable; the sacrificial hanging of the sons of Saul, and the slaughters committed by Samuel, by Elijah, and others, indicated by the phrase "before the Lord," and especially the massacre commanded by Moses, of the idolatrous Israelites (Exod. xxxii. 27), which, however obscurely narrated, is believed by some critics to have been of a sacrificial nature, implied by the phrase "consecrate yourselves" (ver. 29). The same idea is mentioned by Micah (vi. 7). The redemption of the firstborn (Exod. xiii. and xxii. 29) implies that, in the first instance, if unredeemed, they would be put to death. Hence, the rite of circumcision seems to be regarded as the sacrifice of a part for the whole. (Exod. iv. 24.) The payment of redemption money for a child was remitted if it died within a month—the law being satisfied by its death.

The extreme difficulty of reclaiming the people from idol-worship, which included the sacrifice of children, as in the case of Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 6), is evident throughout the whole history, notwithstanding the obscurity and confusion in which so many parts of it are

[1] John i. 27, 29.

involved. (Ps. cvi. 37.) The prophet Ezekiel clearly refers to human sacrifices as practised in his time (xxxiii. 25), which constituted one of the gross sins he reproved—as more particularly the sacrifice of children (xx. 26); indeed his representations would imply that Israel was, even then, wholly given to idolatry, and knew nothing of a better worship. The book of the Law was unknown in the time of Josiah, in whose reign a copy of it was singularly found in the temple (2 Kings xxii. 8); and throughout much of the history no reference is made to the existence of the Mosaic worship, while idolatry is constantly brought under our notice.

The remarkable declaration of the prophet Jeremiah (vii. 22), that God *did not* ordain the sacrifices at the time of the delivery of Israel out of Egypt, has been appealed to by some as an admission that the Law was really a compilation of later date, and that in fact the Israelites were for many ages absolute idolaters, to whatever extent some few more enlightened and pious individuals may have maintained a purer doctrine and worship; and that it was not till a much later age that that purer system was really established, and that *then* it began to be an object with the compilers of traditions to make out for the purer system of religion an antiquity which was, in truth, quite fabulous. This was after the return of the small remnant, and the rebuilding of the temple, when, under Ezra, it is believed the present canon of the Old Testament (or at least a great part of it) was collected, and much of it, on this hypothesis, in fact, composed. Thus the ideas really belonging to a later age were ascribed to one much earlier. By this view, it is attempted to explain the apparent contradictions in various parts of the history, and account for the sanguinary and barbarous character of so many of the events.

Without reference to any such theories of the origin or composition of the early Jewish history, it is, at all events, sufficiently evident, on the very face of the narratives, that the Israelites were, even to a late period, in a state little removed from absolute barbarism, and were, as a nation, in the lowest and most puerile state of intellectual and moral enlightenment—"a hard-hearted and stiff-necked generation." Individual exceptions there doubtless were; but the whole series of deeds of violence and bloody atrocities which distinguish the narrative of their national existence, as well as the equally sanguinary character of their laws and religious rites, and the fearful enormities and cruelties all described as sanctioned by Divine authority, sufficiently prove one

thing,—how utterly inapplicable is the whole system, or any part of it, to a more advanced state of things, or to the general acceptance of the world, even were it not expressly declared to be exclusively peculiar to the Jews, and even with them, having served its purpose, to have come to its end.

It is beyond the scope of the present remarks to go into the discussion of another point which many raise out of the facts just referred to, viz., the difficulty of believing that such a system was of *Divine appointment.* It will suffice here merely to observe that the whole state of things (the barbarism and savage ignorance) to which it applied, it will hardly be denied, if a Providence be admitted at all, were matters of *Divine appointment or permission;* and such a people were *incapable* of any better or more spiritual system. The objections to the system enjoined, apply equally to the condition of the people and the whole course of the Divine government.

## § III.—THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

The ministry of Christ preliminary.

When we proceed to consider the actual ministry of Christ during his sojourn on earth, in his teaching we find *no repeal* of an old dispensation to substitute a new, but a gradual method of preparation, by spiritual instruction, for a better system.

St Paul declares that, in his human capacity, Christ was emphatically "under the Law."[1] Hence he observed it himself, and enjoined it on those he addressed. During his ministry on earth, the kingdom of heaven was still only "at hand," and "to come."[2] Serious misconceptions often arise from applying his instructions without remembering this distinction, and that he was *addressing those under the Law still in force.*

To the Jews in general he inculcated moral and spiritual duties, not any *change* in existing obligations, but reform in *motives* and *practice.* He censured severely the hypocrisy and ostentation of the Pharisees

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[1] Gal. iv. 4.

[2] Mark i. 15; Matt. vi. 10; Luke xvii. 20, xxii. 18.

and their followers, their excessive minuteness even in matters ordained, and their "making of none effect" the Divine law by human additions.[1] Yet he offered no disparagement to the Law as such. While he insisted on its weightier matters, he would not have its lesser points neglected.[2] He enlarged its spirit, yet acknowledged its letter as the rule still in force on the Jews. His own example was emphatic. His plain declaration implies none of those refined distinctions which have been sometimes drawn as to the meaning of the terms "destroy" and "fulfil."[3] To quiet the apprehensions of the Jews as to his having a design hostile to the Law and the prophets, he assures them that his very aim was to obey it in every particular; "to fulfil," in their phrase, "all righteousness;"[4] and so his Jewish followers were exhorted to "keep the commandments" if they "would enter into life;"[5] and doing so, they were "*not far* from the kingdom of God,"[6] though not yet in it. Not the least of the commandments was to be broken, no part of their force to fail, during that age or dis-

He upheld the Law.

[1] Mark vii. 13.
[2] Luke xi. 42.
[3] Matt. v. 17.
[4] Matt. iii. 15.
[5] Matt. xix. 17.
[6] Mark xii. 34.

pensation,[1] which was to introduce "the kingdom of heaven."

He upheld particular observances.

Thus far in general; in more special instances we find him upholding the authority of the existing church and its teachers, and the appeal to its tribunals.[2] He recognised the Mosaic law of marriage and divorce; and though he limited the latter more strictly,[3] it was to repress the abuses of it which then prevailed, in repudiation for every slight cause[4] by the summary act of the husband; but this only under an express reference to what was the original design of the institution, from the authority of the books of Moses, and as recorded by him in the primeval narrative—and all this, it must be remembered, while polygamy was still in existence.[5]

He referred to fasting as an existing rite under the Law, though sternly reproving the hypocritical

[1] Matt. v. 18.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 1, xviii. 17.

[3] Matt. xix. 3.

[4] The expression, παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας (Matt. v. 32), puts the case of fornication out of consideration—as, indeed, obviously must have been the case, it being by the Law a *capital* crime.

In Matt. xix. 9, for the common reading, εἰ μή, Griesbach adopts μή simply, which makes it stronger in the sense above.

[5] See note p. 107.

and ostentatious performance of it.[1] In the same terms he censured formality and ostentation in almsgiving and prayer,[2] and taught that offerings at the altar were not to be omitted, though reconciliation was of more importance.[3]

The Sabbath.

He particularly and repeatedly reproved the Pharisaical moroseness in the observance of the Sabbath; himself wrought cures on it, and vindicated works of charity and necessity,[4] yet only by such arguments and examples as the Jewish teachers themselves allowed, and their own scriptures afforded authority for; but he did not in any way modify or abolish it, or substitute any other for it. At the same time he fully asserted his power to do so. He declared himself "Lord also of the Sabbath," *i.e.*, he had *power* to abrogate it partially or wholly, if he thought fit; but he did not *at that time* use such power. And more precisely he added,[5] "The Sabbath was made for *the man* (διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον), not *the man* for the Sabbath" (ὁ ἄνθρωπος); it was

[1] Matt. vi. 18; comp. Isa. lviii. 5.
[2] Matt. vi. 1–5.
[3] Matt. v. 23.
[4] Matt. xii. 1; Luke xiii. 15; John v. 9, &c.
[5] Mark i. 27.

an institution enjoined by way of *adaptation* to the case of those to whom the precept was given, but of no inherent eternal obligation in itself.

He defeated insidious questions by an appeal to the Law itself: "What is written?"[1] and taking occasion from a point disputed among them, he enforced the *two great commandments*[2] as the sum of the Law and the prophets, and in general urged obedience on the very principle and promise of the Law itself—"Do this, and thou shalt live."[3]

The great commandments.

In his public discourses and addresses he took the Decalogue as the text of his instructions to the Jews,[4] and made many enlargements upon it, giving them new precepts expressly *in addition* to it, not as *unfolding* anything *already contained* or *implied in it*, but expressly contrasting his own teaching with what "was said of old." But we find *no modification or softening of the Law, no repeal of one part and retaining another*, as is often imagined.

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[1] Luke x. 26; Mark x. 3, &c.

[2] Matt. xxii. 37, comp. with Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18; Matt. vii. 12; Tobit iv. 15.

[3] Luke x. 28; Rom. x. 5; Matt. xix. 17; Gal. iii. 12, comp. with Lev. xviii. 5; Ezek. xx. 11; Neh. ix. 29.

[4] Mark x. 19; Matt. v. 21, &c., xix. 16, &c.

The precepts of Christ addressed to the Jews as referring to the Law still in force, must be understood subject to those conditions, and not as the full disclosure of the Gospel. The two great commandments and the principle of love fulfil the whole of the Law and the Prophets—but not therefore the whole gospel: since charity cannot justify, and it is only "by faith" that "we stand."

New and higher principles hinted at.

Christ's teaching during his ministry was plainly but *preliminary* and *preparatory* to the establishment of the new dispensation. His discourses were simply practical, yet with an obvious peculiarity of adaptation to the ideas of the Jewish people. He inculcated a more spiritual kind of obedience. He taught by instilling motives and principles rather than laws and precepts, realities rather than forms. "The mysteries of the kingdom" were veiled in parables to the multitude, explained to the disciples in private, and understood only by those who "had ears to hear."[1] During his ministry "the kingdom of heaven suffered violence,"[2] the gates were not yet thrown open; the more enlightened partially

[1] Matt. xiii. 9–17.

[2] Matt. xi. 12.

gained an insight into it, and the strong in spirit forced an entrance.

He pointed to the necessity of a new beginning from first principles,[1] for becoming as little children, holding out the prospect of a progressive enlightenment,[2] urging the Jews especially to search their own scriptures[3] (those in which "*ye* think ye have eternal life") in support of his claims, and insisting especially on a new and higher "regeneration" than that acknowledged by the rabbis."[4]

Christ's ministry only to Israel.

He repeatedly declared his mission to be *only* to the House of Israel. In some few instances, indeed, Gentiles came to him; but no distinct instruction was given, except in the one remarkable case of the woman of Samaria, which is peculiarly important as being the *only distinct* reference, in Christ's teaching, to the new dispensation *as extending to the Gentiles,* and the *termination of the old* with respect to the *Jews.*[5] The first three Gospels detail the preparatory instruction given to the Jews; but the fourth Gospel alone points out this characteristic of the

[1] Matt. ix. 17, xviii. 1.
[2] John viii. 31.
[3] John v. 39.
[4] John iii. 3.
[5] John iv. 21.

new dispensation even at its commencement.[1] It announces the necessity of regeneration;[2] points to the bondage under which the Jews lived, and from which Christ was to set them free;[3] and alone records the declaration of the universal extension of an independent spiritual religion, announced to the woman of Samaria.

According to the whole system disclosed in the New Testament, it is clear that Christ's kingdom could not properly begin till after his death and resurrection.[4] In the first three Gospels its extension to all nations, though more than once *hinted at* in his discourses,[5] and indirectly *figured out* in several of the parables, was not *positively announced* till the final charge was given to the apostles.[6]

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[1] John i. 17. [2] John iii. 2. [3] John viii. 32.
[4] Luke xxiv. 46. [5] Matt. viii. 11, &c.
[6] Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8.

## § IV.—THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

THE Apostles, when they succeeded to the work which their Master had bequeathed them, in the first instance followed closely in His steps; their views at first were wholly restricted to the enlightenment of their own countrymen. It was not without extreme surprise and reluctance that they could admit the idea of an extension of such privileges as were offered in the Gospel beyond the pale of their own nation or religion. Their minds and convictions were but gradually and partially opened and enlightened to the true view of the case. Their preaching in the first instance was confined to Jews and proselytes, who continued under the Law and in the worship of the synagogue, simply adding the belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and joining in Christian communion. The discourse of Stephen[1] evinces, however, a wider spirit.

The apostles at first preached to the Jews alone.

The Apostles themselves conformed to the Law in

[1] Acts vii. 48.

all particulars; even St Paul did so, while he claimed the liberty of doing otherwise, and blamed St Peter for inconsistency in deviating from it even in one point.[1]

The case of proselytes.

One of the most marked peculiarities and important provisions of the Mosaic law was (as before seen), that its privileges were vouchsafed to those of other nations who submitted to the initiatory rite, which admitted them at once to all the conditions of the covenant. All others it regarded as reprobates and children of wrath. Of this permission many of the Gentiles had availed themselves, especially about the period of the introduction of Christianity; to these the Apostles addressed themselves as to the other Jews. In fact, Christianity was long confined chiefly to Jews—Hebrew or Hellenistic—and converts from among those of other nations who had previously conformed to the Law, and were familiar with its ordinances. In addressing such parties, the appeal would be naturally made to the Old Testament, as furnishing proofs of Christianity such as on their own principles must be convincing to them while they still acknowledged its obligations.

[1] Acts xxi. 24; Gal. ii. 11.

Distinction of Jew and Gentile done away.

The first great step was the announcement of the *abolition of the separation* between Jew and Gentile, commenced in the commission to Peter to convert Cornelius[1]—a commission hesitatingly received, and requiring confirmation by a heavenly vision.

Of the preaching to the Samaritans nothing is recorded; but it was doubtless accordant with the words of Christ to the Samaritan woman, and could involve little reference to Jewish obligations.

Case of the Gentiles.

With regard to the actual Gentiles the case was very different. Very many of the more educated among the heathen of that age had begun to feel the emptiness and the abomination of the rites of idolatry, and were thus anxious inquirers after a higher and purer faith, which large numbers of them found, to a certain extent, in becoming hearers at least, or external proselytes, of the Law, for which ample opportunities were afforded in the Jewish synagogues existing in every city. Yet there was the full and embarrassing conviction on their minds, that such a religion did not offer all they wished. They felt that they were still aliens and

[1] Acts x. 34.

outcasts, unless they fully conformed to the terms and rites of the covenant; and to this many objections would oppose themselves.

The preaching of St Paul.

It was from this embarrassment that the preaching of the Apostles, especially of St Paul, relieved them. From the universal spread of the Israelites, the Gentiles were for the most part already *acquainted* more or less with the Hebrew belief and usages. Hence, that in the Apostles' teaching there should be continual allusions to such ideas would not be surprising. But the material consideration was, that these were not the things insisted on. The great truth proclaimed to them was, that *without the Law* they might be admitted, by the direct way of a simple faith in Christ, to all those high spiritual privileges, and to that acceptance, in a spiritual service, of which even the privileged Jew was not *really and effectually* a partaker, unless he followed them out in the same spirit of faith and by acknowledgment of the same Redeemer.

Thus they were called to salvation, "not through the Law, but through the hearing of faith."[1] The

[1] Gal. iii. 2.

Apostle did not go forth preaching to them the Hebrew scriptures, or urging on them the obligations of the Hebrew law. Of these the Gentiles acknowledged nothing, and indeed might clearly see that they could not apply to them in any way.

The Gentiles not under the Law,

In the original teaching addressed to those who were purely Gentiles or heathens, there is no instance of any reference being made to Old Testament authority, *to the Law as preliminary to the Gospel*, or to any supposed *primitive religion*, as to a sort of prior but forgotten obligation, as some seem strangely to imagine. The appeal was not to the Jewish scriptures, which would have been irrelevant, but to the light of nature (in all the few cases recorded), to the *natural* evidences of a Supreme Being, to the moral law of *conscience*, and then directly to the fact of Christ's resurrection and its consequences. Such was the tenor of St Paul's discourse at Lystra and at Athens,[1] and such the purport of his whole elaborate argument in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans,[2] where he positively and pointedly makes his appeal to the Gentiles *not* on the ground

but under Nature.

[1] Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 22.

[2] Rom. i. 19, ii. 14, &c.

of the *revealed law*, but solely on that of *natural* reason and conscience. And, just as he referred the Jews to their scriptures, so, to enforce his argument with authorities to the heathen, he quotes their own poets.[1]

Independence of Gentile Christianity.

The omission of any reference to *previous obligations* (which, if they had existed, were certainly unknown) is *emphatic*. Any supposed universal law given to the Patriarchs would clearly have required to be revived; but no intimation or even allusion of the kind is to be found in the records of the apostolic teaching. In the conception of the enlightened Gentile convert, there neither was nor could be any reference to what might be recorded in the earliest portion of the Hebrew scriptures as in the slightest degree *revived* under the Gospel, or as in any way different in its application from what was contained more specifically in the Law. The Gentile knew nothing of any such earlier or general obligations; he embraced the Gospel as standing on its own ground, and in essential *independence of all previous dispensations*, though, from its Jewish origin, the lan-

[1] Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Tit. i. 12.

guage of its announcement might be unavoidably mixed up with some references to Jewish peculiarities.

No Gentile Sabbath.

Such a reference, for example, was manifestly requisite for any revival of a primeval Sabbath, had it been contemplated, as imagined by some; but, it is needless to say, no such intimation can be found. The only allusion to the subject at all is addressed to the Hebrews;[1] and the turn of the allusion is figurative and obviously quite different, and to this effect:—There is a rest,—a figurative sabbath (σαββατισμός),—for the people of God; but it is *not* the rest spoken of after the creation,[2] *nor* that of the land of Canaan;[3] therefore it is another rest, eternal and heavenly.

Attempts to bring them under the Law,

The very natural belief of the Jews, that the Gentiles were incapable of justification except through conformity to the covenant of circumcision, at a very early period led to attempts to impose the Law on Gentile converts[4], until the question was finally settled by the apostolic decree, in which certain observances

[1] Heb. iv. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.* ver. 8.
[4] Acts xv. 20, 28.

*only* are retained and prescribed, and these merely enforced as being practically "necessary" from the circumstances of the times; and among the few points which *are* enforced upon them, the total omission of *the Sabbath*, and of all other legal distinctions, as of meats, &c., is *emphatic*, as well as the absence of any recognition, whether generally, of the Law as such—even in respect to its several precepts,—or of any previous dispensation, or of any part of it, or an enlarged or modified view of its precepts to be made the rule of Christian obedience. But so inveterate were the prepossessions of the Jews, that attempts of this kind were continually made, which called forth the special censures of St Paul, and the strongest arguments against these notions, so destructive to the real spirit of the Gospel—such as form the main purport of his Epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, of material portions of that to the Romans and the second to the Corinthians,[1] and of scattered declarations in nearly all.

resisted by St Paul.

Hence, the expression *Christian "liberty"* (often singularly misinterpreted) obviously applies only, by

Christian liberty.

[1] As, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, &c.

way of *contrast,* to the particular instance of Judaising ; while the assurance, "ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (the necessity for which arose solely from the same cause), is most carefully guarded against any such misapplication as would sanction sin, or any tendency to the preposterous doctrine of Antinomianism.[1] No such language need have been used with respect to Gentile converts, but for such attempts at enslaving them. The Apostle addressed distinctly both those "under the Law"—the Jews—and those "not under the Law"—the Gentiles. The Jews generally were still under it, though they might have been released from it ; but the Gentiles *could not be released from that to which they had never been subject.* To say that they were *free from the law of the Hebrews* was indeed true, but *superfluous.* They needed not to be told so ; what was to bring them under it ? Certainly not the Gospel. The Gentiles did not pass from *under the Law* to the Gospel, but from a state of *ignorance* and *idolatry* to one of enlightenment and Christian hope. Christianity, as addressed to the Gentiles, was a transformation from

[1] Rom. vi. 1, 14.

the condition of *nature* to that of *grace*. By *nature*, they were children of wrath; by *grace*, the sons of God by adoption.[1]

The strong feeling of the Jews with respect to the distinction of circumcision appears, however, very reasonable. It was more than mere national prejudice; it arose out of the belief in the Divine authority of the covenant, which involved all the other obligations of the Law, and to them seemed not to be abrogated without the loss of that distinction. Hence the difficulty of the argument with them. It is, however, conducted with consummate skill by the Apostle, directing his reasoning with admirable effect, so as at once to bear on the case of the Gentiles, and with equal force on that of the Jews, in a way which they must acknowledge as conclusive on their own principles.[2]

St Paul's argument both to Jews and Gentiles.

He maintained, himself, a compliance with the ordinances yet subsisting: "to the Jews he became a Jew," as "under the Law;" to the Gentiles as "without the Law:"[3] but this was no deceptive assumption, since he *actually was* in one sense both.

[1] Eph. ii. 3, &c. [2] As in Rom. xi. 13, &c. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 20.

The distinction of meats, clean or unclean, of days to be kept holy or not, remained actually in force to the Jewish Christians until their convictions became sufficiently enlightened to see the designed abolition of those distinctions. To the Gentile it was equally clear that they were not obligatory *on him*, while his service was a spiritual one in faith. Under no such obligation originally, he did not now incur it; and (if it were needed) a still more positive declaration of his freedom from such ordinances is made by St Paul, who places the Sabbaths in exactly the same predicament as new moons and distinctions of meats, and distinctly declares all alike to be shadows.[1] Even among those who had conformed to the Law, in sabbaths and meats each might judge for himself;[2] there was no moral immutable obligation, no natural or eternal distinction; but neither party was to judge the other. Each acting in faith was accepted in doing so; to act otherwise would be sin.[3] But each was exhorted to mutual charity,—a line of conduct pre-eminently recommended by the Apostle's own example.[4] But there was no compromise of

[1] Col. ii. 18.
[2] Rom. xiv. 5, 6.
[3] Rom. xiv. 23.
[4] 1 Cor. x. 23, viii. 13, &c.

essential truths. We cannot but be struck with the contrast of the Apostle's liberality of sentiment with his strenuous assertion of Christian freedom,—his anxiety to avoid tempting a weak brother to offend, and his stern refusal to give way to those who sought to impose the obligations of the Law on the Gentiles, his charity in practice contrasted with his firmness in teaching, his conciliation in conduct contrasted with his uncompromising boldness in doctrine.

Condemnation and justification.

The one essential and fundamental doctrine of "Christ crucified"[1] was preached alike to Jew and Greek, as the author of salvation equally to those under the Law and those without it.[2] To both parties it was argued that they stood equally *condemned* in the sight of God. The Gentiles were expressly shown to be in this state of condemnation from their own moral depravity, *not* from any sentence of a covenant which their remote forefathers had broken, as some have fancied. Setting aside the total unreasonableness of such an imagination, nothing can be more clear or positive than the argument of St

[1] 1 Cor. i. 23.

[2] Rom. xv. 8, 9.

Paul, that they stood condemned expressly *without* any such *revealed law*, and *solely by their violation of the law of conscience* written by natural light in their hearts.[1] Still less were they to be awakened (according to the modern phrase) by any terrors of the law of Sinai given to the Jews.

On the other hand, the Jew stood condemned because he had transgressed the law of revelation, which he acknowledged to be "holy, and just, and good," in which he believed himself justified. St Paul therefore expressly argues that he was *not only not justified, but positively condemned* by that very law in which he trusted and made his boast, which he "approved" and "served with his mind," yet, in truth, "with his flesh he served sin."[2] The difficulty was to convince the Jew that *he stood condemned by his own law*, that "by it he had the knowledge of sin," that "the strength of sin was the law," but the victory in Christ.

Thus the Law itself bore testimony to the Gospel:

[1] Rom. ii. 15.

[2] Rom. vii. 25, &c. Such, at least, appears to me to be the real and plain tenor of this chapter, so often imagined difficult to rescue from the eager grasp of the Antinomian.

in this sense it was that the Apostle did not "make void the law through faith,—but established" it.[1]

Practical obligations of both.

Both being thus *alike under condemnation*, though *by different laws*, it followed that both were to be accepted and justified on another, a new and common ground—that of faith in Jesus Christ; and the grand point thus was, that the line of separation was removed, all distinctions were merged and lost in the greater privilege now conferred by the Gospel. There was no distinction of parties; God was just (both to Jew and Gentile), and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.[2] "Of the twain was made one new man;"[3] Christ was to be *all and in all.*

Christ redeemed the Jews "from the curse of the Law;"[4] the Gentile "from all iniquity," and "from this evil world."[5] Both were called to repentance and faith, but on different grounds; both led, though by different ways, to moral duties. To the Jew, love was "the fulfilment of the Law,"[6] Christian charity "the end of the commandment."[7] St James, writ-

[1] Rom. iii. 31.
[2] Rom. iii. 26.
[3] Eph. ii. 11–22; 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. vi. 15; Col. iii. 11.
[4] Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5.
[5] Tit. ii. 14; Gal. i. 4.
[6] Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 8.
[7] 1 Tim. i. 5.

ing to the Jews, enjoins "the pure service,"[1] "the royal law according to the Scripture."[2] But to the Gentiles, without any such reference, it was simply "the things just, and pure, and true,"[3] in accordance with natural morality, to "live soberly, righteously, and godly,"[4] to walk "honestly,"[5]—but all this based on the high and peculiar motives of Christian faith.

Appeal to the Old Testament.

To the Jews, the grounds of Christian obligation were often represented and enforced by *analogies* drawn from the Old Testament. Thus the Gospel itself is, by *analogy*, and with especial reference to the words of the prophets, called a *covenant*,[6] not implying that there was *really* any covenant, but only that it stood in *the same relation* to Christians as *the covenant* did to the Jews, since it is expressly distinguished (indeed the whole argument of the Apostle turns on the distinction)[7] as *not really a*

[1] i. 27 [θρησκεία].
[2] ii. 8.
[3] Phil. iv. 3.
[4] Tit. ii. 12.
[5] Rom. xiii. 13.
[6] Heb. viii. 6; comp. Jer. xxxi. 31.
[7] Gal. iii. 18. The word διαθήκη, rendered "covenant" or "testament," indifferently, in our version, signifies, generally, *any legal act or deed*, whether of *one* party, as a *will* or "testament," or of *two*, as a *covenant*.

But the guiding principle in interpreting the words of the Apostle

*covenant*, BUT A FREE PROMISE AND GIFT, *not* the act or deed of *two parties*, as a compact, but of *one*, as a gift or a testament.

The Jews gradually released from the Law.

To the Jewish disciples, in the first instance, the Apostles neither insisted on the observance of the Law, nor on any abrogation of it, though at a later period we find the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, more especially, gradually and cautiously

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must be that which he himself lays down in the broad emphatic truth, that the very nature of Christianity and its privileges is that of a "free gift." This appears to be clearly the main drift of the confessedly somewhat involved and difficult passage referred to (Gal. iii. 18, &c.) The Law was a *covenant* "in the hands of a mediator," that is, Moses (Deut. v. 5; Lev. xxvi. 46), acting between *two* parties. But "God is *one*" [party], and acted as *one* in giving the *promise*, which was the διαθήκη of *one* party, as a *deed of gift*, not of two, as in a *compact*. The whole nature and terms of the Gospel are opposed to the idea of a *covenant*. The tenor of it is altogether at variance with such an idea, which would destroy the very principle of free justification by faith.

The whole metaphor in Heb. ix. 16 seems to me manifestly to justify the rendering of διαθήκη in that place, as in our version, by "testament," though I am well aware that some commentators prefer another rendering. Many persons ignorantly reason on the "covenant," so rendered in several places in our version, as if Christianity were, like the Law, an *agreement* between God and man, a *compact* of duty and reward, which it *essentially* is not. Some even still more blindly confound it with the "covenant," as they term it, made by the sponsors in baptism, which is obviously a totally different thing, a simple promise, made *to the Church*, that the child shall be taught his obligations, or a pledge that the adult individual recognises them as the condition on which baptism is granted.

pointing out to them its transitory nature, and that, having fulfilled its purpose, it was to cease.[1] Thus the Jew was to be brought gradually to see his deliverance from the "bondage"[2] of Sinai, effected by his increasing faith and knowledge, supported by the arguments from Abraham[3] and the prophets,[4] "the Law being his schoolmaster to bring him to Christ."[5] The Law ceased at no one time, but to each individual as his belief and enlightenment progressively emancipated him.[6] It was never formally rescinded; it died a natural death.

Abrogation of the Law as a whole.

Wherever the cessation of the Law is spoken of, it is *as a whole*, without reference to any distinction of moral or ceremonial, letter or spirit. We find no such qualification as, that "the Law, as being of Moses, was abrogated, yet, as the law of the Spirit, still binding," as some have represented it; the whole tenor of the argument and language of St Paul is utterly opposed to any such idea. It was

[1] *E.g.*, Heb. vii. 18.

[2] Gal. iv. 25; 2 Cor. iii. 6–14; Heb. xii. 18.

[3] Gal. iii. 6; Rom. iv. 1. [4] Hab. ii. 4. [5] Gal. iii. 24.

[6] Rom. xiv. 1–6. The Rabbis held that distinctions of meats, and even the Law itself, were to cease when the Messiah came, as also the Sabbath, *arguing expressly from* Isa. lxvi. 23. (R. Samuel, in Talmud. in Titulo *Nidr.* Cited by Grotius, *de Ver.* v. 9, 10.)

an entire system which passed away, to give place to a new one based on a *different ground.*

Abolition indifferent to the Gentiles.

But if all this had been otherwise, it would little concern *us Gentiles.* The Law should be contemplated as a *national and local,* rather than as *a temporary* dispensation ; for, had it *not* been *temporary,* it would still have been restricted *to one people ;* the Gentiles would have had no part or concern in its *continuance* (unless as becoming proselytes to it), nor had they in its *cessation.* Christianity, as addressed to the Gentiles, *was not founded on Judaism.* It does not imply any *substitution of one obligation for another ;* it stands simply on its own ground ; the essential character of its institutions is independent. Its few observances were, in fact, at first adopted *along with* those of Mosaism, by the churches "of the circumcision," who formed so large a part of the early Christian community; and consequently *could* not be a *substitution* of the one for the other, or any kind of *continuation* of one in the other.

Judaisms in the apostolic teaching.

From the circumstances of the case the teaching of the Apostles would necessarily exhibit a large infusion of Judaical ideas ; and we accordingly find them introducing a multitude of adaptations of passages from

the Old Testament,—of references to existing prejudices, even superstitions,—besides maxims, and proverbial sayings,[1] and forms of expression habitual among the Jews, which sometimes, mistaken for original sentiments, lead to serious misconceptions. Hence the important use of the Old Testament in illustrating the meaning of so many passages in the New. The reasonings of the Apostles would naturally be built upon opinions currently received, and on appeals to the Jewish scripture, of undeniable force to those who recognised its authority, and the introduction of analogies and applications of the incidents and language of the Old Testament,[2] for the instruction of converts who could only be convinced through such association of the new truths with the old.

Analogies from the Old Testament.

It is in this way only that the Apostle Paul sanctions any use of the Old Testament scriptures by Christians, in the practical and typical accommodation of passages to points of Christian instruction.[3] It was thus that to Timothy the Old

[1] *E.g.*, Rom. xii. 20; James v. 20; 1 Pet. iv. 8, &c.

[2] *E.g.* Rom. vii. 1; Eph. vi. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 10; 1 Tim. v. 18.

[3] Rom. xv. 4; 1 Cor. x. 1, &c.

Testament was still to be "profitable," but only when applied "through faith in Jesus Christ."[1] And thus St Peter (the very apostle of the circumcision) commends the use of the prophetical writings *only as* preparatory and auxiliary to the higher and progressive enlightenment of the Gospel.[2]

Types in the Old Testament.

The more we consider the nature of the precise points of analogy dwelt upon, the more we perceive the independent, spiritual characteristics of the Gospel to which they point—as in the typical application of the temple to the body of Christ, and thence to the community of Christians;[3] of Jerusalem, to that which is above;[4] the laver, to regeneration;[5] the altar and sacrifices, primarily to the death of Christ,[6] and thence, in a lower sense, to almsgiving,[7] to praise,[8] to the reasonable service of Christians;[9] the priesthood, primarily to the person and office of Christ, though in a secondary sense to all Christians;[10] cir-

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[1] 2 Tim. iii. 15.
[2] 2 Pet. i. 19; 1 Pet. i. 11.
[3] 1 Cor. iii. 16.
[4] Gal. iv. 26; Heb. xii. 22.
[5] Tit. iii. 5 (λουτρόν); Exod. xxx. 18, &c.
[6] Heb. xiii. 10, x. 1, &c.
[7] Heb. xiii. 16; Phil. iv. 18.
[8] Heb. xiii. 15.
[9] Rom. xii. 1; Heb. xi. 20.
[10] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

cumcision, to purity of heart;[1] the anointing, to grace;[2] the Sabbath, to the rest reserved for the faithful.[3]

Abuse of such applications.

In after-times, the same desire of adaptation, without apostolic warrant, and carried often to extravagant lengths, led to a larger use of the Old Testament among Christian writers, and the spirit of allegorising and evangelising all parts of it. The Apostles' arguments and representations misunderstood from want of consideration of the circumstances, appeals *ad hominem* taken *positively*, and *concessions* taken for *demands*, in modern times have become subjects of endless mistake and confusion.

Appeals to the Old Testament in the apostolic writings.

Most of the first converts, if not living under the Law, were yet familiar with the Old Testament, from the number of Jews resident in all their cities. Thus St Paul, writing to the Gentile Ephesians, after

1 Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6; Jer. ix. 4; Rom. ii. 29; Col. ii. 11.

2 1 John ii. 20.

3 Heb. iv. 9. It is worthy of remark, as a single instance evincing the common neglect of New Testament authority in subjects of the kind here discussed, how universal, in popular elementary religious works, is the clearly erroneous statement that circumcision was the *type* of baptism; whereas in the New Testament several types of baptism are mentioned, but circumcision is not among them, and the antitype of circumcision is mentioned, but it is not baptism.

having enforced[1] the institution of marriage on purely *Christian* grounds, *confirms* it[2] by a reference to the Hebrew scriptures,[3] as Christ had done.[4] To the Corinthians[5] he upholds it on purely moral grounds. And, again, in exhorting to filial obedience,[6] after first putting it on the clear ground of *right*, he adds—but only as a *confirmatory* quotation, to enhance its force—that it was *also* enforced by the precept of the Mosaic law, which, he remarks, is the first of the commandments to which, under that dispensation, a promise of temporal blessings was annexed,—in neither case making the Old Testament commandment the *basis* of the obligation. In the same way, to Timothy, he refers to the *existing* belief, "Godliness hath the promise of this life as well as that to come;"[7] and more generally, to that eminent convert (who had been so sedulously brought up in the knowledge of the Old Testament), he writes that the Law may still be good if used and applied with due discrimination.[8] Its proper application was

[1] Eph. v. 22.
[2] *Ibid.* 31.
[3] Gen. ii. 24.
[4] Matt. xix. 5; Mark x. 7.
[5] 1 Cor. vii. 2.
[6] Eph. vi. 1, 2.
[7] 1 Tim. iv. 8.
[8] *Ibid.* i. 5, 8, &c.

to the condemnation of gross sinners; but as a Christian convert he was rather to look *from* it to more elevated principles—not to "the commandment," but to "the end" of it, which "is charity." So, again, in speaking to the Roman converts as those "who know the Law,"[1] having given the comprehensive principle of Christian love, he adds, as confirmatory of it, "For he that loveth another hath fulfilled *the Law*,"[2] and then instances the different precepts which are all comprehended in the saying of the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Christian principle, thus, included and superseded *all* the precepts *even of the Law*.

Christian institutions not from the Law.

In the Apostles' teaching we find no dependence recognised of the one system on the other,—no such idea as that of a *transference* of Old Testament ordinances to Christianity, or the fulfilment of one in the observance of the other, as imagined by many, the Christian institutions being essentially grounded on independent principles. We perceive no carrying on of the priesthood in the Christian ministry, no continuation of sacrifices in the Lord's Supper, or of

[1] Rom. vii. 1. [2] Rom. xiii. 8.

the Sabbath in the Lord's day. Charitable collections were made on the first day of the week,[1] precisely because it was not the Sabbath, on which they were deemed unlawful by the Jewish converts.[2]

Yet, from a misconception of points of analogy in such cases, often directly at variance with the express words of the Apostles, opinions have prevailed, on these and the like points, tending not a little to perplex and impair the simplicity of the Gospel.

Christian forms independent.

All the original Christian institutions were independent and simple. We must carefully distinguish, from the more essential and permanent, some minor ordinances of a purely temporary and occasional character, which certainly bear a more formal appearance, but were evidently adopted for the sake of peace and union, and especially for the great object of mutually conciliating the Jewish and Gentile converts, or from a wish not abruptly to violate ex-

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

[2] The Jews considered it unlawful to touch money on the Sabbath. (Vitringa, transl. 75–167.) But the next day, Cocceius observes, they regarded "non ut festum, sed ut *ἐργάσιμον*" not as a feast, but as a working day. (Vitringa, 77.) Again, the phrase *μία τῶν σαββάτων* is generally understood to be, according to the Jewish mode of naming the days of the week, the expression for the first day. Yet some render it, "upon *one of the days* of the week."—*Tracts for the Times*, ii. 1, 16.

isting customs,—as, *e.g.*, the injunctions in the apostolic decree,[1] already referred to, and some of those given by St Paul to the church at Corinth[2] and to Timothy.[3]

Particular instances.

The same may be said of the practice of fasting. Though retained by the Apostles on some occasions, yet there does not exist a single precept or hint for its general adoption by Christians; much less is there any sanction for other ascetic observances, which soon claimed an availing merit utterly at variance with the spirit of the Gospel. So far as they had begun to prevail, they met with unequivocal censure[4] from St Paul. Of other institutions of Christian worship, very little can be collected from the New Testament. At first the disciples met *daily* for prayer and communion.[5] In one instance afterwards some think it *may be implied* that they assembled peculiarly on the first day of the week,[6] though the inference is a very doubtful one; and in the latest period of the New Testament age "the Lord's day" is spoken of once,

[1] Acts xv.
[2] As throughout 1 Cor. v.–vii.
[3] 1 Tim. v. &c.
[4] Col. ii. 18–23; 1 Tim. iv. 3, 8.
[5] Acts ii. 26.
[6] Acts xx. 7. See Jahn's *Bibl. Antiq.* § 398, and Heylin's *Hist. of Sabb.* ii. 25.

but wholly without explanation,[1]—though that expression is understood by some in a totally different sense. Thus the evidence for this observance from the New Testament amounts to little or nothing.

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1 Rev. i. 10. The term rendered "the Lord's day" in the authorised English version (*ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*), was in after ages used to signify the first day of the week, on which the resurrection of Christ was commemorated. It has been inferred that it was used by the author of the Apocalypse in this sense. See *Time and Faith*, ii. 440, 607.

Others, however, have held that it means simply "the day of the Lord," the substantive being merely exchanged for the adjective, as in 1 Cor. xi. 20, *τὸν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* (the Lord's Supper), which would make it merely synonymous with *ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου*, the day of the Lord (1 Thess. v. 2, and 1 Cor. v. 5). See Heylin's *Hist. of Sabbath*, pt. ii. 34. Such a use of the adjective became extremely common in the following ages, as we have repeatedly in the fathers the corresponding expressions, "Dominicæ crucis," the Lord's cross; "Dominicæ nativitatis," the Lord's Nativity (Tertullian, *De Idol.* 5); *λογίων κυριακῶν*, the sayings of the Lord (Euseb. *Hist.* iii. 9). According to this view, the passage would mean, "In the spirit I was present at the day of the Lord," the word "day" being used for any signal manifestation (possibly in allusion to Joel ii. 31), as in John viii. 56, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day." And the peculiar use of the word *ἡμέρα*, as referring to a period of ascendancy, appears remarkably in 1 Cor. iv. 3, where *ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας* is rendered "man's judgment."

We must class with very visionary interpreters those who can see anything really bearing on the question in the circumstance of our Lord's appearance on the eighth day after his resurrection (John xx. 26), or in the disciples being then assembled, when we know that they were all along abiding together in concealment for fear of the Jews. Nor, again, will their being in like manner together (Acts ii. 1) on the feast of Pentecost appear remarkable, on the same grounds, even supposing the computation admitted which makes it fall on a Sunday, which is ope to question.

The institution of the ministry and form of church government were derived, not from the temple and priesthood, but from the constitution of the synagogues, which were actually the churches of the Jewish converts.

The ministry from the synagogue.

Yet, it has been a favourite theory with a section of Anglican divines to maintain an analogy, or rather continuous identity, of the Levitical with the Christian priesthood,—derived originally from Jerome and others of the fathers, and first, perhaps, put forth in circumstantial detail by Archbishop Usher; but seen at once to be utterly overturned by the mere examination of simple matters of fact, by which the whole *ecclesiastical* system is shown to have originated out of the *synagogal*, not the *sacerdotal*,—the bishops, elders, and deacons mentioned in St Paul's epistles being simply officers of the synagogue so called.[1]

Certain regulations also were connected with the extraordinary gifts,[2]—as temporal visitations[3] and the power of inflicting them,[4] and the anointing of the

[1] On this point, see Vitringa, *de Synagogâ*, of which valuable work an excellent abridged translation has been published by the Rev. J. L. Bernard: London, 1842. See especially pt. ii. ch. xi. p. 208.

[2] Mark xvi. 17. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 30, &c. [4] 1 Cor. v. 5.

sick,[1] clearly peculiar to the first stage of the Gospel system. But with respect to any *temporal* inflictions, the broader principle always laid down, and indeed a direct consequence of the higher and eternal sanctions held forth in the Gospel, is, that they are *not judgments, but trials*.[2] Under the Law, *temporal* blessings and judgments were awarded, because it did not teach any *future* state; *national* blessings and judgments, because it made one *nation* the people of God. Under the Gospel, no retribution can be temporal, because all is referred to the *future* state; no blessings or judgments can be *national*, because it makes *all nations* the church and people of God.

No temporal or national judgments.

Judaical elements incidental.

In general, there may have been in all the primary forms of the Christian institutions much of a Judaical element perhaps unavoidably mixed up. All that this shows is, that such peculiarities, so far as they existed, were adaptations to the Judaical spirit naturally so prevalent in the early communions, but that they cannot be regarded as intended to be of essential import or permanent application to other people and future ages, and under a wider diffusion of a

[1] James . 14, comp. with Mark xvi. 18, and vi. 13.

[2] As in Rom. v. 3, viii. 18–28; Heb. xii. 5; . i. 7–21, iv. 12, &c.

religion from whose spiritual essence they are so manifestly alien.

Christianity, as indeed it is hardly conceivable it should have been otherwise, was at first communicated and established in the way of adaptation in its *outward form* to existing ideas and conditions. Thus it won its way at first according to the economic dispensations of Divine grace, while its spiritual essence asserted its internal influence over the disciple who had the capacity to receive it; and under whatever outward aspect, the words of Christ were verified, "the kingdom of heaven is within you."

## § V.—VIEWS OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL HELD IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

Early tendency to Judaism.

In the early ages of the Christian Church we find a prevalent tendency to engraft Judaism, in a greater or less degree, on Christianity; and the steps by which such a system advanced and gained ground, and the extent to which it was carried, are not difficult to trace or to explain. But the peculiar turn which has been given to somewhat similar ideas in modern times is, apparently, much less easy to justify or account for on any rational principles.

Appeals to the Old Testament for proof.

The constant appeals of the Apostles to the Old Testament, in their arguments with the Jews, were doubtless of the most primary importance and convincing cogency with those they addressed. To the Gentiles they would not have been so; yet the peculiar character and result of the appeal was, no doubt, felt to be precisely that of valuable testimony extorted from an adverse party, and brought to support our cause, and, therefore, in constantly exhibiting which a sort of triumph was felt.

Hence the more general introduction, in the early Church, even among the Gentiles, of the Old Testament scriptures, and the prominence given to them, which continued by custom long after the original occasion had ceased.

Not pushed to an extreme.

But, for the Gentile converts, with the broad distinction between themselves and the Jewish churches before their eyes, this reference to the Jewish scriptures could not by possibility degenerate into such inconsistent notions of their application as would suppose Gentile Christians brought under the obligations of the old precepts.

Without direct Judaising, however, the gradual adoption of some Judaical forms in Christian worship, though not supposed obligatory as such, naturally arose out of the synagogal model on which all the first churches were framed; and it would not be a matter of surprise if, occasionally, Judaical ideas had been mixed up with Christian doctrines, institutions, and practices even to a greater degree than we find was the case.

No confusion of obligations.

In the minds of the early Christians there were great questions as to whether Judaism was to be superadded or not to Christianity, in whole or in

part; but there neither was nor could be the smallest confusion of thought between the two. To their apprehensions Christianity was one thing, Judaism another; but there could be no such idea as the recognition of the obligations of the one as implied in, or as a part of, the other.

The Lord's day.

The Jewish converts continued, along with their other peculiarities, to observe the Sabbath, which, it is hardly necessary to say, the Gentiles did not. From an early period, it seems probable that both Jewish and Gentile churches had begun to hold religious assemblies on the first day of the week.[1] But it is from Justin Martyr[2] (A.D. 140) that we first learn

[1] The well-known letter of Pliny to Trajan (about A.D. 100) mentions the Christians assembling together for worship *on a stated day*:—"Soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere."—*Epist.* xx. 97.

[2] Τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἡμέραν κοινῇ πάντες τὴν συνέλευσιν ποιούμεθα, ἐπειδὴ πρώτη ἐστὶν ἡμέρα, ἐν ᾗ ὁ Θεὸς, τὸ σκότος καὶ τὴν ὕλην τρέψας, κόσμον ἐποίησε, καὶ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἡμέτερος Σωτὴρ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη. "On the day of the Sun we all assemble in common, since that is the first day, on which God, having changed darkness and chaos, made the world; and on the same day our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead."—Justin Mart. *Apol.* i. 67.

We may here advert to a passage in Ignatius, which has been (apparently very needlessly) the subject of some controversy in relation to the present topic. The passage is as follows:—Εἰ οὖν οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφέντες, εἰς καινότητα ἐλπίδος ἦλθον—μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες—(ἐν ᾗ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν

the regular establishment of this practice, as well as its professed ground and object; as being the day on which the work of creation,[1] according to the existing

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ἀνέτειλεν δι' αὐτοῦ, καὶ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ [ὅν τινες ἀρνοῦνται], &c.), πῶς ἡμεῖς δυνησόμεθα ζῆσαι χωρὶς αὐτοῦ, &c.—Ignatius, *ad Magnesianos*, § ix.; Jacobson's *Patres Apost.* ii. 322: Oxford, 1840.

Now, some commentators strangely assume that after κυριακήν the word ἡμέραν is to be understood, imagining it to refer to the Lord's day, put in contrast with σαββατίζοντες in the former clause. Neander, in his *History of Christianity*, translated by Mr Rose (i. 336), refers to this passage, adopting this supposition, on which the translator remarks (in a note) very truly, though somewhat laconically, that he can only find "something of the kind" in the passage.

But taking the passage simply as it stands, the defect of the sentence is the want of a substantive to which αὐτοῦ can refer. This is, in some degree, supplied by κυριακὴ ζωή, "the life of the Lord," thus having a personal meaning expressed by the adjective, as in many other instances. The word ζωή, meaning our Lord's *life*, as emphatically including his *resurrection* (as in Rom. v. 10, &c.), presents precisely the same analogy to the spiritual life of the Christian as is conveyed in Col. iii. 3, 4, and many other passages. Thus, upon the whole, the meaning is simply this:—"If those who lived under the old dispensation have come to the newness of hope, no longer keeping Sabbaths, but living according to our Lord's life (in which, as it were, our life has risen again, through him, and death [which some deny], &c. . . . .), how shall we be able to live without him?" . . .

In this way (allowing for the involved style of the whole) the meaning seems simple, consistent, and grammatical, without any gratuitous introduction of words understood. It offers an instance of that species of contrast which the early fathers were so fond of drawing between the Christian and Jewish dispensations, and between the new life of the Christian and the ceremonial spirit of the Law. Ignatius concludes with the passage cited as the motto of this work.

[1] A.D. 360, Athanasius (*Ecc. Hist.* xii. 32) says, "As it was commanded at first to keep the Sabbath in memory of the completion of

Jewish belief, was held to have been begun, and on which also the new spiritual creation was commenced by the resurrection of Christ. Other writers[1] adopt more fanciful analogies, referring to the Mosaic creation, yet always distinctly such as to exclude all idea of any reference to the Sabbath, which would have been an entire confusion of ideas between the day of the *commencement* of the creation and that of its *cessation.*

Gradual corruptions of observance.

In the course of the first few centuries many corruptions had crept in; and about the third century we for the first time trace some increasing precision in the formal observance of the Lord's day, implied in certain expressions of Tertullian, Dionysius of

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the creation, so do we honour the Lord's day as the beginning of the new creation."

Gregory Nyssenius (*Orat. in S. Pasch.*), "As God rested on the seventh day from His work of creation, so on the day of the resurrection the Son of God truly rested from all his works.

[1] In the spurious Epistle of Barnabas (which, as generally allowed to be a composition of the second or third century, may be taken as evidence of views then held) the writer makes out a comparison of the six days of the creation with six ages of the world, followed by a seventh of rest under the Gospel, to which is to succeed an eighth of final triumph; and "therefore," he adds, "we keep the eighth day with joy, on which also Jesus rose from the dead" (*Ep.* i. 15):—"Αγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ὀγδόην εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν.

Corinth (somewhat later), Clement of Alexandria, Hilary, and others.[1]

No adoption of Sabbatism.

In those ages we discover an increasing admixture of Jewish ideas and Old Testament views with the pure spiritualism of apostolic, and especially of Pauline Christianity; it is only astonishing that, in the advance of such corruptions there was not evinced a *greater* disposition than we actually find for introducing Sabbatism. But even the nearest

1 As instances of these superstitious notions, we may cite Tertullian (*De Orat.* § 23), who says, "Solo die Dominico resurrexionis non ab isto tantum (genuflexione), sed enim anxietatis habitu et officio cavere debemus, differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus;" and Dionysius, quoted by Eusebius (*Hist.* iv. 23),—Τὴν σήμερον οὖν κυριακὴν ἁγίαν ἡμέραν διηγάγομεν. And at dates later than this we find increasing indications of the same spirit, as appears from Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.* vii. p. 744), Hilary, Augustine, and other authorities, of which a large number will be found in Bishop Pearson, *On the Creed*, notes (vol. ii. p. 341, ed. Oxford). Hilary says, "Cum in septimâ die Sabbati nomen sit et observantia constituta, tamen nos in octavâ die, quæ et ipsa prima est, perfecti Sabbati festivitate lætamur." —*Comm. in Psal.* prol.

Yet a clear and wide distinction was preserved between the Christian festival and the Jewish Sabbath. The Apostolic Constitutions (c. vii. § 24) enjoin the observance of the Sabbath as commemorative of the creation, and the Lord's day of the resurrection (see Bernard's *Vitringa*, p. 205, note 241). The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364, canon xxix.), however, took rather an opposite tone, and censured the observance of the Sabbath, as the badge of Judaising, whil it enjoined that of the Lord's day, on which Christians were required to be at leisure, σχολάζειν, as apposed to σαββατίζειν.

approaches to it, in the writings of a few of the fathers and the decrees of some councils, are marked by expressions which preserve a broad *distinction* between the idea of Sabbatism and a Christian observance.

The writers of those times often speak of the Lord's day in conjunction with the Sabbath, but always in the way of *contrast*, and as obviously distinct institutions. And doubtless with the view of conciliating the Judaising churches it was, that the celebration of both days was upheld, both in the so-called Apostolic Constitutions (a forgery of the fourth century) and by the celebrated decree of Constantine[1] (A.D. 321), who first made any prohibition of secular business on Sunday, with a special exception in favour of the labours of agriculture. Similar regulations were made by various later enactments, from A.D. 600 down to those of Pope

[1] Euseb. iv. *de Vit. Const.* 18. See *Time and Faith*, ii. 570; also Jortin's *Remarks*, iii. 326. A singular exemplification of the continuance of this twofold observance, carried out even to a great degree of rigour, and preserved to modern times, has been presented in the discovery, by Major Harris, of an ancient Judaised Christian church in the interior of Ethiopia. The same thing was long ago noticed by Brerewood (*Enquiries, touching the Diversities of Languages and Religions*, p. 22). See Appendix II.

Gregory, 1244, though by no means extending to the prohibition of *all* secular employments.

Contrast of the Lord's day with the Sabbath.

But though a certain kind of assimilation between the two institutions was carried further by some later writers, yet neither was the observance itself ever pushed to the extent which has since been sometimes contended for, nor was it possible for that confusion of ideas between the two institutions to arise which in modern times has extensively prevailed. Indeed, from the mere fact of this twofold observance of the Sabbath and the Lord's day, which prevailed with some churches, one thing is perfectly manifest,—viz., that there could not have existed the slightest notion of the obligation of the one institution having been *transferred* to the other, as imagined by many in later times.[1] There is, again, a wide difference between "keeping a day holy" and simply *commemorating* an event upon it; yet the latter easily degenerates into the

No transfer from one day to another.

[1] Yet so inveterate has this absurd idea become in the minds of modern divines, that even so acute and independent a writer as Bishop Warburton, arguing, too, expressly against the Sabbatists, speaks, incidentally, of "*a change in the day* having been made by the primitive church" (*Div. Leg.* 434, note), which most assuredly there never was nor could have been except by Divine authority.

former idea. Down to late times we trace some remains of the observance of the Sabbath in the solemnisation of Saturday as the eve or vigil of the Lord's day.

The constant reference to the Old Testament law on the part of the Jewish converts not unnaturally led to the disposition to find in it at least some sort of allegorical application to the Gentiles. Thus, guided, possibly, by the figurative language of the Apostle,[1] and the fondness for what they termed evangelising the Old Testament, some of the Fathers adopted the idea of a metaphorical interpretation of the Fourth Commandment (where, of course, the literal sense could not apply), in the case of Gentile converts, as meaning the perpetual service of a Christian life, preparatory to eternal rest.[2]

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[1] Heb. iv. 4.

[2] Thus Justin Martyr (*Dial. cum Trypho.* 229) says: "Σαββατίζειν ἡμᾶς ὁ καινὸς νόμος διαπαντὸς ἐθέλει," "The new law obliges us to keep a perpetual Sabbath." And later, to the same effect, Augustine, whose opinions approached more towards modern Calvinism (*Ep.* 119), observes: "Inter omnia decem præcepta solum id quod de sabbato positum est figurate observandum præcipitur,"—"Among all the ten commandments, that alone respecting the Sabbath is to be observed figuratively." Athanasius also says, "We keep no Sabbaths, as the ancients did; looking for an eternal Sabbath." Quoted by Heylin, ii. 183.

## § VI.—LATER VIEWS OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Judaism of the Schoolmen.

THE strange and inconsistent notion of a *transference* of the obligations of the Judaical religion and its institutions to those of Christianity, more especially of a change in the *day* of the Sabbath, had been partially adopted by some writers of earlier times, though not acknowledged by the Church.[1] But the notion of Christian ordinances *succeeding in the place of* those of Judaism first began to be systematically upheld, among other refinements and corruptions, by the Schoolmen, especially by Thomas Aquinas.[2] Yet he regards this as done solely by the *authority of the Church,* and from motives of *expediency;* and contends that such observances, especially that of the Lord's day, are not to be enforced in a Judaical spirit.

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[1] The strongest testimony adduced, and so much dwelt on by some, is the passage: *μετέθηκε ὁ κυρίος τὴν τοῦ σαββάτου ἡμέραν εἰς κυριακήν* (*Homil. de Semente*), quoted by Heylin (ii. 9) as from an unknown author.

Chrysostom also (x. *Hom. in Genes.*) has some expressions which seem to represent the Old Testament Sabbath as *suggestive* of a weekly festival or observance of some kind.

[2] See Heylin, ii. 170, 176.

Judaising tendency of Romanism.

Bellarmine afterwards maintained that the distinction of days and festivals under the Law was *not taken away* but *changed* by the Christian Church; which, *as being infallible*, had doubtless power to make such a change in *divine* institutions: though otherwise it manifestly could not. Practically, however, in the later ages of the Church, prior to the Reformation, we find the ceremonial spirit rather displaying itself in the multiplication of religious festivals and solemnities, than in any increasing precision in the observance of the Lord's day. This is exemplified in the practice of the Roman Catholic Church, which, in fact, has never pushed the observance of the Lord's day to any extent of rigour, and only in a very modified sense recognised any connection between it and the Sabbath. The Trent Catechism (on the fourth commandment) extends precisely the *same* obligation to all the festivals of the Church. Nevertheless[1] Calvin and his followers strongly accused the Church of Rome of Judaising; as after the corruptions of the Schoolmen he had some ground for doing.

[1] Instit. ii. 8.

The practice of introducing the sanctions of the Old Testament in those times, had begun to assume the character of a more direct habitual acknowledgment of its authority. And in the earlier stage of the Reformation some more precise theories of this kind found ready support in the extravagant notions of the literal applications of Scripture into which the violent reaction of opinions carried a portion of the Reformers; involving very peculiar notions of what was termed "the moral law" of the Old Testament, and by a strange contradiction making the obligation of the Sabbath a chief point and instance of it. Indeed, the very use of the phrase "moral law" betrays this confusion of thought, which has been at the root of all the popular errors on the subject.

Progress of Judaica' ideas in the age of the Reformation.

But these ideas led to a more precise kind of theory of "legality," the main outline of which seems to have been this: it was held that the Old Testament, and more especially the Decalogue, was designed to convey a revelation of the moral law to all mankind; that this law, without reference to any anterior distinctions of natural morality or the like, derives its whole force and obligation

Theory of Legality.

from the sole will of God positively declared, and is to be found specially summed up in these precise commandments; that all men are subject to it even though in ignorance of it, whether Jews or Gentiles; but all, even when endeavouring to live by it, are in a state of bondage, and stand condemned by it: from this bondage and condemnation the Gospel by grace and faith releases them, and they are then free from the "covenant of works," and enjoy "Christian liberty." And further, as Christ said he came not "to destroy the Law but to fulfil it," so by his perfect righteousness he fulfilled it *for* those who believe in Him, and who, through faith, have His righteousness *imputed* to them, and are thus freed from the Law and the necessity of seeking after that righteousness which they could not obtain, having the burden of Adam's sin imputed to them, besides their own infirmities.

Yet, with astonishing inconsistency, the upholders of this doctrine have usually contended for the observance of the Sabbath, as well as for temporal and national retributions. Such extravagances might appear startling to those not versed in theological systems, but they received obvious

proof from the literal application of Scripture texts.

Protest against Judaism,

But against all tenets of a legal and Sabbatical formalism, Luther, with his accustomed masterly grasp of the breadth and depth of evangelical principles, most strenuously contended, as also still more remarkably (considering his principles) did Calvin,[1] especially denouncing the notion of the *moral* obligation of the Sabbath as one of the "follies of false prophets" (*nugæ pseudo-prophetarum*); and more forcibly still in his French version, as "*mensonges des faux docteurs*"—the lies of false teachers.

By Lutherans and Calvinists.

Luther claimed a freedom to retain or dispense with the observance of days, just as it might be found to tend to spiritual edification, or to superstition; and in this strenuous repudiation of Judaical subjections in general, and Sabbatism in particular, he and Calvin were supported by the most eminent Reformers on the Continent, both among the Calvinists as Beza, and the Lutherans as Chemnitz and Bucer. Similar views were professed by several of the English Reformers, as Tyndal and others; and at

[1] Instit. lit. ii. c. 8, § 28–34.

a later period by the greater minds of the reformed school; by Grotius[1] and Limborch, as by Milton,[2] Prideaux, Heylin, and others, in England.

The public confessions and formularies of most of the older Continental reformed communions, bear ample testimony to their belief in the same entire absence of any Sabbatical institution under the Gospel; yet they evince more or less an admixture of that confusion of ideas which admits a ground of obligation dependent on the Old Testament. Some, however, as Limborch and the Remonstrants,[3] denied the obligation of any distinction of days, except on grounds of expediency, which has been since the argument of Barrow, Paley, and others.

The English Reformers opposed to Judaism.

The commencement of the English Reformation was characterised by some equally striking protests against Judaism. The "Necessary Erudition," authorised by King Henry VIII., declared the fourth commandment to be wholly ceremonial, and not

[1] De Verit. c. 5. [2] Christian Doctrine, 128, Ed. Sumner.

[3] The first Synod of Dort (1574) restricted all observance of Sunday to the morning. The second Synod (1618) *allowed* afternoon services. For various authorities see Appendix IV.–X.

moral; and that all days are holy alike; yet it in some degree neutralised that declaration by various practical refinements, distinctions, and compromises.

Formularies of the Church of England.

It is true that in the existing authorised formularies, besides declaring generally, in the Seventh Article, the obligations of "those commandments which are called moral"—(an obvious Latinism for "moral commandments" simply,)—the Church of England introduces the Decalogue into her communion service with a prayer for its observance, and teaches it also in her Catechism, but, in doing so, it ought to be specially remembered, though too commonly forgotten, also gives her own interpretation of it; and thus we ought, consistently, to accept the Decalogue in the service in the sense which the Church herself puts upon it in the Catechism. Now, after rehearsing the Commandments, the learner is there expressly taught their import and meaning by a special exposition in what is called our duty towards God and towards our neighbour. In these expositions, each *Jewish* commandment receives its appropriate *Christian* sense; and the meaning annexed to the Fourth Commandment, and the duty stated to be

inculcated in it, is simply this:—"To serve God truly all the days of my life;"—not one day in seven, but every day; not on the day of the Divine rest after the work of Creation, according to the Judaical belief, but throughout our whole lives by a perpetual Sabbath of rest from sin, and working out righteousness.

Throughout the Prayer-book there is not the slightest reference made to the observance of the Lord's day; its services are *daily*. Sundays, indeed, are reckoned in the calendar, and have certain services appointed for them, *precisely on the same footing* as other festivals and holy days, and even in a lower degree than some of the latter.

The existing authorised formularies were designed to be *comprehensive*,[1] and are characterised on these points by the *omission* of topics of dispute. While the Decalogue was inserted to satisfy one party, the Christian exposition of it, in which its Judaical tendency is neutralised, must be assented to by all.

[1] See title to Thirty-nine Articles.

Yet we cannot but notice among the larger portion of the Protestant testimonies, whether of public formularies or of individual opinion, indications of that primary confusion of thought which seems all along to have led them to imagine some previous obligation of Old Testament ordinances on the Gentiles, which was at length *abrogated* or *had ceased*, instead of the simple admission that *no* such obligation *had ever existed*. This idea seems to have more or less hampered all their expositions and arguments. Confusion of ideas.

Thus in many such statements we find the idea of a change or *substitution* made by the Christian Church of the Lord's day for the Sabbath, inculcated, as if it were possible for any *human* authority to change a *divine* ordinance, or as if the Christian Church, by any known declaration, had ever pretended to make such a change.

The notion of the complete identification of the Lord's day with the Sabbath seems to have been first formally propounded in this country by Dr Bound (1595)—a divine of great authority among the Puritans—from whom it was adopted by the Westminster Assembly in their Confession, and Puritanical Sabbatism.

thence has become a recognised tenet of the Scottish and other Presbyterian communions in Great Britain, and imported by them to America, though as wholly unknown to the Continental Protestants as to the old unreformed Church.

Various forms of Sabbatism.

In later times this idea has been variously modified. Some Sabbatists, acting up to the *commandment* in strictness, consistently keep holy the *seventh* day of the week. Many adopt the distinction of the *Jewish* Sabbath, though we can find but one Sabbath mentioned in the Bible; and speak of the Christian Sabbath—an institution wholly without warrant from the Christian Scriptures. Some insist on the devotion of a seventh part of time, when the whole life is too little. Some turn away from all such distinctions as mere questions of words and names. This, however, is mere ignorance or evasion of the real question. It is, indeed, wholly unimportant by what name we choose to designate anything, provided that we are not *misled* by the *name to mistake* the *thing*.

But though it is perfectly clear that the authorised formularies of the Church of England recognise no other Sabbath than a continual service and sanctifi-

cation of the whole life, in agreement with the ideas of the Fathers before referred to, yet it is true, that among the divines of most approved reputation in the English Church, there has been all along a division of opinion on the subject, not unconnected, probably, with the continued struggle between the Puritanising and the Catholicising extremes of the Reformation. Most of them, however, even those most opposed to the Puritanical views, to a greater or less degree, seem intent rather on endeavouring to moderate between opposing opinions, and attempting a middle path of compromise, than on grasping firmly broad principles, and maintaining a clear consistency in their own views. Whether from real confusion of ideas, or from hesitation and caution, the wish to conciliate, or the fear to offend, the most eminent writers of the Church of England, with few exceptions, where they in any instance evince or avow a clear and consistent view of the relation of the Gentile Christian to the Old Testament law on the one hand, or of the origin and authority of the Lord's day on the other, almost invariably neutralise and nullify their statements by some admission of a confused and con-

Opinions of English divines.

tradictory kind respecting the Decalogue and the Sabbath,[1] or else by referring to pleas of utility and policy.

[1] For instances see Appendix XIII. and XV.

## § VII.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE QUESTION AT THE PRESENT DAY.

Appeal to utility.

We have here all along viewed the question of the alleged obligations of the Old Testament law on Christians in a purely Scriptural point of view—as a question of theological principles, not of mere practical expediency. Now, it is readily manifest that with a very large portion of those who discuss the subject at the present day, it is avowedly taken up almost entirely in this last point of view.

Thus, many observe that the Mosaic Law is far more complete and exact as a code of religious obligations, and more precisely adapted for popular guidance and instruction than the New Testament, and thus think it desirable to adopt it. Others think that it is to be taken as a sort of preparatory or initiatory system, through which the disciple may then pass on to Christian faith. They hold that the restraints of the Law are most useful and salutary *to the many*, from which the privileged few may doubtless be exempted;

that the Law was intended for a sort of preparatory discipline of the human race—and that this is as needful now as formerly—more especially that as the Law was a dispensation of *severity* and wrath, —so those terrors of the Law are equally necessary now to awaken men to the mercies of the Gospel.

Inapplicable to a question of Divine appointment.

It has, however, only to be asked, Was all this a *Divine* appointment? If so, what right can we possibly have to model its application according to our ideas of the *necessity* of the *case* or our conceptions of *utility?*

Some argue on weak grounds.

On the other hand, those who are opposed to the idea of the obligations of the Law often argue their case upon very weak grounds. They often go into elaborate reasoning, to show that such or such institutions are in their nature ceremonial and not moral;—or that they would be burdensome or impracticable for general adoption, and *therefore* that *on these accounts* they cannot be supposed generally obligatory. But the real question is, were all this otherwise, were the injunctions in question ever so simple, rational, or applicable, were they *intended* to apply *to us?*

If the question be one of *Divine* obligation, it is not the supposed excellence or utility of an institution which would make it obligatory, on the one hand, any more than its inconvenience or inutility would annul it, if it were really enjoined, on the other.

The real question Scriptural.

There are, again, many who labour to prove the precise period and circumstances of the abolition of the Mosaic Law; thus, as far as Gentile converts are concerned, taking needless trouble to prove the *abrogation* of obligations, of which they cannot show the previous existence. Others, contending for the *repeal* of *some parts* of the Law, labour to defend the *exceptions* before they have established the *rule*. The "*onus probandi*" clearly lies on those who would *impose* the obligation, not on those who contend that it *never existed*.

Question of abolition superfluous to Gentiles.

But the slightest appeal to Gospel authority at once *puts an end* to all such questions. If we take the New Testament as our guide, the Law is at an end, even where it was once obligatory: To the Jewish convert it has ceased; to the Gentile Christian it is simply a matter in which he has no concern. The question, whether to the Jew it were abolished or

The Old Testament to be judged of by the New.

continued in force, by the coming of the Messiah, is to the Gentile a question of no import. Nothing in the Gospel, he is assured, can bring him under its obligation; and if he put any interpretation on the Sabbath, it is to regard it, like the rest of the Law, as typical of better things, as shadowing a perpetual Sabbath of that spiritual service which must be offered in spirit and in truth, which knows no distinction of days, but consists in the devotion of the whole life, looking to an eternal rest hereafter.

Distinction of the moral law.

But a distinction has been urged by many, who strongly assert the eternal obligation of what is called "the moral law," which they strangely imagine is founded on the Old Testament, and even more preposterously contend is in some way identified with the Decalogue, and, though delivered to the Jews exclusively, is yet addressed to all mankind; and this confusion of ideas is worse confounded by mixing up this notion of morality with the claim of the Gospel and the "liberty" which it proclaims.[1]

The Christian moral law.

The morality of the Gospel is grounded on a totally distinct basis from that of the Law. But,

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

that it includes *many of the same precepts*, and that this coincidence should be dwelt upon by Christ and His apostles in their teaching to the Jews and those habitually conversant with the Jewish scriptures, is what naturally arises out of the circumstances of the case. In the New Testament, not only is a far higher moral standard set up, but in several passages there is a clear reference made to the *obligations of natural morality*. Still, though properly moral principles are referred to, the *grounds* of those moral duties and virtues are always expressly connected with the *peculiar motives* of Christian belief. Thus the reference to things "honest, just," &c.,[1] is obviously connected, by the context, with the doctrinal views just before discussed. The same may be constantly observed in other passages.[2]

Moral duties founded on Christian doctrines.

Throughout the fuller development of Christianity in the apostolic writings, the enlarged statements of doctrinal views of justification, regeneration, and a future life, are always so expressed as to enforce motives for the practical duties which are expressly

[1] Phil. iv. 8.

[2] As, *e.g.*, Rom. xii. 1; Eph. iv. 25, &c.

exhibited as the proper results, fruits, and consequences of faith, and not as *founded upon* any abstract *moral* principles, however *conformable* to them.

Whatever difference of opinion may exist on the question of principles of moral sense implanted in our nature, it is on all hands admitted that, when we turn to the pages of the New Testament, *in point of fact* all those duties which can come under the denomination of *moral*, on any theory, *are distinctly included* and laid down even in direct precepts—nowhere, indeed, exhibited in any one code or summary, but much more implied and involved in the whole spirit and tenor of the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles. This, then, to all believers may suffice to furnish a simple, unassailable basis of Christian moral obligation.

Moral duties not from the Old Testament.

It is, no doubt, true *also* that *some* of the same moral duties (though by no means all of them) were enjoined in particular precepts of the Mosaic Law and the prophetical books. But those who receive the Gospel simply as the universal, final, and complete dispensation, will surely acknowledge the obligation of moral duties, not *because* some of them may be found prescribed in the Old Testament, or the

Decalogue, but *because* they are conformable to the spirit and principles of the New.

Observance of a day not a *moral* duty.

But with respect to one instance, often mistaken, we may observe that the distinction between *moral* and *positive* precepts is sufficiently clear. On any intelligible view of the principles of moral obligation, it is perfectly clear that a precept to *consecrate* any portion of time is in its nature a *positive*, not a *moral* injunction,—that on no *moral* grounds can we regard *one day* as more sacred than another; and practical reasons for devoting set portions of time to religious purposes cannot apply to one seventh, more than to any other portion of time. If so, just in the same way it might be argued, *e.g.*, cleanliness is a virtue; hence the ablutions and purifications of the Law are moral precepts perpetually binding.

Expediency and utility.

The plea of expediency is often urged; but it must be acknowledged that no moral or religious benefits, however great, can justify a disregard of truth, a corruption of Christianity, or the encouragement of superstition. The plea of civil and social benefits derivable from formal observances has been the favourite argument with many who take up the

question rather on the ground of external policy than of religious truth,—and especially as maintaining a convenient hold on the minds of the multitude, which they are desirous to secure even by legislative coercion. In a word, their Sabbatism is precisely that of the legislators and philosophers of the heathen world, who by the very same arguments upheld their religious festivals.[1] Nor can we fail to trace precisely the same spirit in the Jewish Rabbis, who, well knowing human nature, avowed the maxim, doubtless most acceptable to the many — "the Sabbath weigheth against all the commandments."[2]

National peculiarity in this respect.

Such, however, are the views which, in one form or another, have become very general among our countrymen, who, under the narrow prepossessions of an exclusive education, are commonly surprised and scandalised when they find in other Christian countries those tenets wholly unknown in which they

[1] Thus Seneca speaks of the practice of all legislators to enjoin public festivals and periods of relaxation as essential to the good of the state (*De Trang. Anim.*); and Plato, carrying the matter higher, says, "The gods, pitying mankind born to painful labour, appointed, for an ease and cessation of their toils, the recurrence of festival seasons observed to the gods."—*De Leg.* ii. 787.

[2] *Midrash*, in Exod. xxvi.

have been kept studiously blindfolded by religious teachers, many of whom, too, know better.

Increased intercourse and information, however, it may be hoped, is now opening the eyes of many to their peculiarly *national* prejudices on these subjects, —an object to which nothing seems more likely to contribute than attention to the simple matter-of-fact view of the whole question here attempted to be followed up.

Puritanism.

In the earlier steps of the Reformation, its scriptural principles were by some carried out to a pernicious and fanatical extreme scarcely less hostile to the purity and simplicity of the Gospel than those of Romanism. The appeal to Scripture was converted (as was before observed) into an indiscriminate Bibliolatry, which has thus in the minds of many become inseparably associated with the idea of Protestantism. Thus arose the tendency to mix up the obligations of the Old Testament with those of the New. Thus it is, in the large admixture and leaven of Mosaism, that the moroseness of the puritanical spirit has ever found the most congenial field in which to display its unhappy tendencies, which we find in the practical results of a narrow,

sanctimonious piety, than which nothing appears more at variance with the free spirit and reasonable service of the Gospel, or more productive of a disposition of bitterness and uncharitableness, so utterly opposed to its precepts.

Such is the unhappy confusion of ideas as to Judaical ordinances, introduced from entirely overlooking the first original question, How can the Old Testament law become applicable to Gentile Christians at all?

Fanaticism and superstition.

Fanaticism and superstition are clearly distinguishable. Fanaticism is an undoubting, boldly avowed conviction of Divine impulse, which hurries on its votary unhesitatingly to follow out its suggestions to any extreme consequence, however preposterous or revolting. Superstition, on the contrary, is ever acting from a lurking dread of some obligation unknown, and is always seeking disguise. The fanatic knows no misgiving; the superstitious is always afraid of his own religion. And it is not one of the least remarkable features of Puritanism, that, in its original principle *fanatical*, it combines with that fanaticism the most *superstitious* notions of religious formalism.

Ancient and modern formalism.

The same spirit of formalism and superstitious observance which had corrupted ancient Christianity still showed itself, only under an altered form. Where the ancient Church had imposed its penances, its fasts, and its solemn seasons, the modern puritanical communions did but substitute their prohibitions of innocent amusements, their unsocial austerities, and their gloomy Sabbaths.

The old Church, by its numerous festivals and solemnities, had fully gratified the natural desire for observing "days and seasons, and months and years." When all these were swept away by puritanical reforms, except one, it was a natural consequence, that upon that one the whole spirit of formal and rigid observance should be concentrated, and an especial Divine sanction for it sought in texts of the Old Testament, when the authority of the Church had been discarded.

Modern Puritanism.

At the present day, among the modern disciples of this school, though they, perhaps, have modified or cut off some of its other more rigid peculiarities, yet this favourite tenet of the Sabbath is upheld in full force; and they find, on this point, numerous and zealous coadjutors in those professing quite

opposite sentiments in other respects,—with whom a supposed plea of utility is usually urged as the motive by which they can justify the maintenance of a formal Judaical ordinance, into which they would metamorphose the simple weekly commemoration of Christ's resurrection; and which is easily imposed on the ignorant and unthinking as an institution of perpetual and Divine obligation. And we cannot but perceive that there is thus too often enforced upon the young and ignorant a slavish superstition, from which they may, perhaps, afterwards free themselves only by a reaction so violent as to produce a permanent aversion to all religious ordinances.

Prevalence of corrupt religion.

Among the generality of mere worldly men there is less of *irreligion* than of *low and corrupt religion;* few *reject* Christianity, compared with the many who *debase* it into mere formalism and superstition. A religion of a certain kind is almost universally upheld; but it is a religion of mere prepossession, party, custom, or conventionalism; or if it advance to anything like more rational principles, it is a recognition of utility rather than of truth, or else a mere adherence to what is established, feeling a dread, above all things, of unsettling men's minds by any attempts

at inculcating more enlightened or more spiritual views, and coupled with a grave and philosophical censure of *extreme* opinions, and high approbation of a steady adherence to the safe middle path—between truth and falsehood.

Formal observance substituted for real change.

It has sometimes been made an objection to Christianity that it, in fact, encourages wickedness, by holding out to the sinner the easy terms of mere repentance and faith; yet practically it is the most difficult thing to induce men to accept those terms. Human nature will cling to *external* means; an uneasy conscience will seek relief, not in a practical and spiritual change, but in formal observances, ceremonial services, and morose austerity. *Moral* corruption is palpably manifest in an immoral life; but *religious* corruption escapes detection under an exterior of sanctimonious rigour, displays itself more especially in affecting violent offence at the irreligion of others, and thus gains credit for exalted piety and goodness.

Tendencies of human nature.

The tendencies to Judaism, arising from mistaken views of Scripture and a want of due recognition of Christianity in its primitive simplicity and purity, as disclosed in the apostolic writings, are powerfully

seconded and upheld by the *tendencies of human nature;* and though there is no foundation for Sabbatism in morality or Christianity, there is a deep-seated foundation for it in the formalism and superstition so congenial to the human heart.

Of all corrupt notions, that of relegating religious duties to certain fixed periods or days is one of the most grateful to human nature, but most radically hostile to Christian principles, though often defended on the plea that what is left to be done at any time will never be done; whereas the true argument is, that it is to be done at *all* times.

Those who are not religious *habitually,* will seek to be so *occasionally;* those who do not keep up *continual* holiness, will seek *periodical* sanctity. Those who do not make their *lives* holy, can punctiliously keep *days* holy. It is easier to sanctify times and places than our hearts; human nature clings to religious formalism, and especially to Sabbatism, as an easy mode of compounding for a worldly, if not irreligious life.

False value attached to forms.

Those who discard or overlook the precise grounds of evangelical religion, to substitute those of a general morality, practical expediency, or vague

devotional sentiment, are fond of appealing to equally varied arguments;—Thus, formal observances are often defended as being the *safeguards of better things:* but this is too often quite fallacious; the external observances soon become *substituted for* the better things, and the votary a slave to them, and superstitiously afraid to omit them. Forms habitually insisted on, become substances. Men come to worship the ceremonies, instead of worshipping God through them; and thus, to many, a creed, a priesthood, the sacraments, the Sabbath, are in fact their deity,—"These be thy gods, O Israel!"

Consequences of the practical argument.

We must, however, carefully consider the consequences. To defend observances, admitted to be in themselves untenable, on the ground of the practical good done by their influence, is a dangerous topic to take up;—it may prove more than is wished. If the *benefit* resulting is to be the measure and standard by which to regulate the acceptance of any tenet, we must then maintain as most salutary doctrines some of the tenets commonly denounced by Protestants as among the worst and darkest superstitions of Romanism.

Judged of *only* by their practical results, how many

such practices might be vindicated! How powerfully (for example) has the preservation of purity been aided by the worship of the Virgin! How many acts of restitution and reconciliation have flowed from auricular confession! what extensive beneficence from the desire to compound for sins by alms! how many noble endowments from the design of delivering souls from purgatory! In a word, every argument for Sabbatism, from its supposed practical benefits, may find an exact parallel of equal force in support of what are condemned as the worst superstitions of dark ages and an idolatrous church.

Disguised Sabbatism,

Superstition is always uncandid and seeking disguise; and thus the lurking spirit of Judaism often takes shelter under the pretext of upholding a decent observance of the *Lord's day*. And, in many instances, even those professing clearer and more purely and peculiarly *evangelical* views, yet *practically* fall into ideas and observances exactly *equivalent* to those of avowed Sabbatism, and, while they professedly disclaim the Old Testament obligation, yet uphold the observance of the Lord's day (losing sight altogether of its original intention) in a way which practically differs in nothing from that of the Sabbath.

Thus an observance which formed no part of the Christianity of the New Testament, is too often made the very essence of that religion,—the degree of sabbatical rigour and moroseness the very test and standard of true piety; thus the profession of the Gospel is often identified with an institution altogether alien from its precepts, and at variance with its express spirit and character, and in fact nowhere spoken of in the New Testament, except in the way of great qualification and disparagement, even in reference to those who were still legally subject to it, and of entire repudiation with reference to those who had never been under its dominion.

at variance with Christian principles.

The considerations of utility and expediency, so often urged, can have no proper place in a question of Divine obligation. We must recollect that the real *question is one of principle;* and the view here taken of it leads to the condemnation of a Judaicil, unevangelical formalism,—the unhappy and superstitious misconception, that *it is sinful to do on a Sunday anything which it is not sinful to do on another day.*

If there be one cause more than another to which the common miserably low sense of Christian mora-

Low sense of Christian morality.

lity may be traced, we may without hesitation ascribe it to the vulgar adoption of the mere text of the Jewish Decalogue unaccompanied by any Christian interpretation, which is too commonly made the only basis and code of moral and religious obligation, in complete misapprehension of the teaching of Christ to the Jews, and in the most direct contradiction to the doctrine of his apostle Paul to the Gentiles,—as well as in the equally singular neglect of the expositions of the Catechism of the Church of England, on the part of those who profess such unlimited respect for her teaching.

## § VIII.—ON THE USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BY CHRISTIANS.

Prevalent confusion of ideas.

In thus vindicating pure Christianity from an erroneous and superstitious admixture of Judaical obligations, arising from the misuse of the Old Testament, it may be proper, before concluding, to advert briefly to some points in which a reference to the ancient Scriptures may be legitimately made by the Christian inquirer, and be found eminently useful.

The common notions, on the subject of the relations of the Old Testament to the New, are often extremely confused and irrational. Because the Gospel originated in Judea, and in its first announcement had a special regard to existing belief and practice, it has been supposed by many that Christianity is founded in Judaism. Because Christ recognised the obligations of the law under which, in His human capacity, He lived, and made its commandments the text of His discourses to the Jews,—and because the Apostles, as well as other Christians in all ages, have

made their appeal to the Old Testament for important branches of evidence as well as elucidation of the New, it seems therefore to have been imagined that it was republished, as it were, and included as an integrant part of the Christian revelation.

But in fact we might rather say Judaism was founded on Christianity, as it is represented as having been *designed* to be a type of it, and to the Jew the preparation for it. "If ye believe in Moses," said Christ to the Jews, "believe also in me." Many modern Christians seem to reverse the appeal, and understand it as if He had said, "Ye believe in me; believe also in Moses." Moses predicted Christ; and his law was to be understood by the Jews as "a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ;"[1] but it is reversing the order of things, for those who have embraced the Gospel to go back to the Law,—to improve perfection—to light a candle at noon-day.

General views of the relations of the Old Testament to the New.

If the New Testament be the authentic record of Christianity, it must be apparent that on this subject we can obtain information from no other source than

[1] Gal. iii. 24.

these recorded declarations of the authorised teachers of Christianity. But even these, under the influence of some of the theories already referred to, have been often interpreted in a sense widely remote from that which a due consideration of the circumstances under which they were delivered would seem to warrant.

The Old Testament understood only through the New.

A consistent Gentile Christian knows nothing of the Old Testament, of its precepts, or of its doctrines, except from the reference to it which is made by his teachers in the New. We can understand it solely as they have represented its claims and meaning; or be guided by it only so far, and in such a sense, as they have taught us to apply it. The frequent practice, adopted both by Jesus Christ himself, the evangelists, and apostles, of appropriating to the purpose immediately in hand passages from the Old Testament which, except from such application, would not appear to have any, or at most only some verbal, or accidental, resemblance to the case, is one which cannot warrant such a practice among us at the present day; much less support the authority which some would give to the Old Testament law as applying to Gentile Christians.

Christ and his apostles, in fact, refer to the Old

Testament solely as an argument potent with those they addressed, as calculated to confirm some more extended precept, as an illustration of some Christian truth, or as suggesting some analogy by which a Christian sense may be put upon the expressions or incidents of the Mosaic or prophetical writings.[1]

In doing so, the Apostles doubtless make frequent use of these allusions as a vehicle of much real Christian instruction. But the essential truths must not be confounded with the particular forms of adaptation in which the religion and laws of a peculiar national system were conveyed. Real instruction may be deducible, but it is not always that which lies on the surface.

The practice of the ancient fathers in giving a figurative and "evangelised" sense to all parts of the

[1] "Hoc præcipue consilio scimus et Christum et Apostolos sæpe adhibuisse e libris Hebraicis sacris, aliquas sententias aut historias; non vero id egisse ut cæteri omnes homines Judæorum cunctas opiniones domesticas studiosissime arriperent, quibus populi hujus omnis historia non sine superstitione solebat consecrari, atque religio illa πνεύματος καὶ ἀληθείας per reverentiam in πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα impediri . . . . . Ista quæ hic breviter observamus si quis omnia neglexerit commiscebit inspirationem atque οἰκονομίαν divinam cum ipsâ catholicâ revelatione: atque non solum difficilis atque molestus ad alios interpres, sed etiam impotens religionis Christianæ defensor fuerit."—Semler, *Instit. Brev.* § ix.; see also § xxxii. pp. 7, 8.

Old Testament was often carried to an extreme of visionary interpretation. But it was, at all events, less unreasonable than that of the Puritans in applying literally all parts of the Old Testament to Christians. The one transformed Judaism into Christianity; the other, Christianity into Judaism.

The Old Testament history.

The use of the Old Testament history is important even to Gentile Christians, as enabling them to trace the progressive course of the Divine dispensations, as well as their relation and dependence. Yet this can only be understood in the light in which it is expressly put by the New Testament writers.

The Old Testament has even been appealed to as that part of Scripture from which we especially learn the providence of God in the moral government of the world; whereas its entirely *exclusive* character —its sole reference of everything to the one object of the dispensation of the chosen people—and the marked peculiarities of *adaptation* in all its representations to a peculiar stage of moral and intellectual advance—altogether clearly show that to convey any such general views of the moral government of the world at large was as wholly alien to its real design, as it is impossible fairly to extract from its declarations.

Doctrinal statements.

The *doctrinal* statements of the Old Testament respecting the Divine nature, personality, attributes, and dealings with men, are *always* conveyed under forms essentially adapted to the apprehensions of the Jews, and the peculiarities of their dispensation. And it is only by carefully abstracting from those peculiarities, by the light of the New Testament, that the Christian can in any way make use of them generally in the expression of his faith, or the language of his worship.

Moral and devotional parts.

In all applications of moral or practical instruction from the Old Testament, the same caution requires to be yet more scrupulously observed —the precepts given to the Jews were wholly conveyed in a form, and were of a nature, adapted to their national and temporal dispensation, and can only be applied by us in a Christianised sense.[1]

Similar remarks may be made with respect to the use of the devotional portions of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms, some parts of which are wholly inapplicable to any Christian purpose in their literal

[1] As, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. ix. 10.

sense, and necessarily require a modified interpretation.[1]

Our Lord referred the Jews to their own Scriptures—"in which *ye* think ye have eternal life"—not to rest in them, but to look there for proof of his mission,—"they are they which testify *of me*."[2] So the applications which the apostles make, invariably give a Christian turn to the meaning of the Old Testament in the passages they cite, which would otherwise convey no such signification. Instances of application.

"These things are written for our admonition,"[3] says St Paul, when he adduces the examples of the Israelites' disobedience, to warn his converts against similar disloyalty *to Christ*.

So, when he applies a passage in the Psalms to Christ, he adds that in this way "whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning:"[4] of course to be applied in a like Christian and enlightened sense, "that we through patience and comfort[5] of the Scriptures might have hope."

The same is eminently the tenor of St Paul's Admonition to Timothy.

[1] As Ps. cix. 5, &c. [2] John v. 39. [3] 1 Cor. x. 11.
[4] Rom. xv. 4. [5] παράκλησις.

admonition to Timothy,[1] so often *partially* quoted, and thus *totally* misapplied. The Old Testament "Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, *through faith* which is in Christ Jesus;" and in this way only is it that "all the Old Scriptures are *inspired*,[2] and profitable for doctrine and reproof, &c."

And it may be not irrelevant here to observe that all this exhortation is grounded on the fact of Timothy's early acquaintance with those writings, and habitual prepossessions in the use of them. The Apostle's language merely tends to assure him that he need not now throw aside a book he had been accustomed to revere, but might still turn it to good account, notwithstanding his higher enlightenment by the Gospel. His language is that of *concession* to Timothy's prepossessions, not of *demand* for any new admission.

Further progress urged.

The references of the Apostles generally to the Old Testament are always made with the view to a further advance and improvement upon its declarations and teaching. Even St Peter, emphatically the Apostle of

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

[2] See § ix.

the Jews, distinctly intimates this with respect to the writings of the prophets, to which he commends them for taking heed, "as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts,"[1] — a clear exhortation not to rest satisfied with the Old Testament revelations, but to use them as means and occasions of advance and progress towards the perfection of Christianity.[2]

Old Testament not contrary to New.

Thus it is undoubtedly true that, as the Article of the Church of England expresses it, "the Old Testament is *not contrary* to the New," since, when the former is interpreted in the sense given to it by the latter, "in both Christ" is seen "set forth" to the enlightened believer. They are not at variance,—as the shadow is not at variance with the substance, the image with the reality.

Hebraisms of Christianity,

In general, we have observed the natural and unavoidable prevalence of Judaical forms of expression in the apostolic writings. In fact, few parts of the announcement of Christian doctrine are exempt from this admixture of Judaical ideas in the *mode* of delivery. But we must always consider the object

[1] 2 Pet. i. 19. [2] Heb. vi. 1.

and force of the illustration with reference to those immediately addressed, and we shall see that it does not affect the real substance of the truths inculcated. Not to dwell on the Judaical ideas implied in such terms as angels, spirits, Satan, Gehenna, and others, it is true that the most essential doctrines are conveyed in terms of Hebrew origin, as in the words "covenant," salvation," "redemption," "justification," "regeneration," "sanctification," "election," and the very name of Christ and his religion. But the name is one thing, the substance another.

do not affect the substance.

Under these external modes of expression, we see an essential internal doctrine of which they suggest the types.[1] The "baptism" and "regeneration" of the disciples of the rabbis was the type of the real new birth of the Christian.[2] The "redemption" of the Law[3] was the emblem of the real spiritual emancipation of the Gospel. The "justification" which the

Types of Christian doctrine.

[1] See above, p. 144.

[2] See Dr Waterland, *On Regeneration*, p. 5, ed. 1806.

[3] Exod. xiii. 13, &c. Important illustrations of the sacrificial principle, and of the "redemption" under the Jewish law, will be found in Mr Mackay's work on the *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, especially pp. 31, 39. See also above, p. 114, note at end of § ii.

Jew expected to find, but could not really find, in the Law, was effectually to be obtained by faith.

The notions belonging to an older state of things, whether heathen or Jewish, of Divine wrath to be propitiated — Divine vengeance to be satisfied by shedding of blood—are expressly done away, under the Gospel, by the *final* shedding of the blood of Christ. Propitiation is merged in reconciliation and atonement (*καταλλάγη*), — "wrath," in "grace," — "enmity," in "peace."[1]

Christ's death was a sacrifice, that there might be an end of all sacrifice. He was himself the priest, that there might be an end of all priesthood. He was prophet as well as priest, to fulfil the ends and mission of both those instituted orders, to supersede the covenant and fulfil the promise; a spiritual king, to put an end to all idea of a temporal kingdom: the Messiah of prophecy to the Jews; the Saviour, and Deliverer, to emancipate, reconcile, and make one the aliens of the Gentile world. Christ's priesthood.

And looking at the absolute and essential *finality* (as represented) of the sacrifice of Christ, we cannot

[1] Eph. ii. 3, 5, 14, 15.

but remark that the vital error of Romanism—and even of some who have professed to adhere to a purer creed—consists not so much in the mere metaphysical notion of transubstantiation, as in the perpetual *repetition of sacrifice*. Thus their attempt to revive the idea of sacrifice equally nullifies the first principle of Christianity on one side, as that of the Puritans to revive the Sabbath on the other.

His second coming.

Again, as to other characteristic points of the Christian doctrine, similar remarks will apply. The recorded predictions of Christ as to His second coming, in the *form* and *manner* of the declarations, are made in conformity to the Hebrew ideas and phraseology. He speaks of his advent in connexion with the destruction of Jerusalem; yet other events and changes are associated with it, and the precise time is emphatically declared to be unknown. The essential admonition is one of warning and preparation;[1] and in the declarations of the Apostles[2] on the same point, most of the modes of representation may fairly be interpreted as figurative, the forms of ex-

[1] Mark xiii.; Rom. xiii. 11–14.

[2] As, *e.g.*, 1 Thess. iv. 16; 2 Pet. iii. 3–13; Rev. i. 7; comp. with Dan. vii. 10, 13; Isa. li. 6; Joel ii. 10, &c. &c.

pression being, in fact, chiefly those derived from the Hebrew prophets, and familiar to the grosser ideas of the Jews of that age.

But "the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation;"[1] the substantial truth is of a spiritual and practical kind.[2] The overthrow of the disciples' idea of a temporal kingdom, induced the more earnest expectation of a heavenly advent; and if they anxiously looked to the near approach of the period of delivery from persecution, and final triumph of the faith, yet they never dwell minutely on that circumstance, but always turn to the purposes of general practical exhortation. Their statements are not for the indulgence of idle curiosity, but for practical use. We should not dwell on the letter of the precise descriptions, but rather turn to the substantial truth of *spiritual* retribution,[3] and the more privileged view of the true believers who "look for Him"[4]—the "blessed hope" of His appearance,[5] in which his true followers "comfort one another."[6]

Platonisms and Gnosticisms of the New Testament.

It is not irrelevant to add that, if thus the

[1] Luke xvii. 20.
[2] Heb. xii. 26; Tit. ii. 13; Rom. i. 6.
[3] Rom. ii. 6.
[4] Heb. ix. 28; Phil. iii. 20; 1 Thess. i. 10.
[5] Titus ii. 13.
[6] 1 Thess. iv. 18.

*Hebraisms* of Christianity form an important point in the elucidation of its doctrines, the *Platonisms* must be admitted as equally material to be considered—those various expressions which had become current with the ideas of the later Platonic doctrines so familiar to the Greek Jews:—as in the well-known instances of the term "logos"—the "pleroma," or fulness of the Godhead—the "aions," or emanations of the Deity, and the various other mystical ideas which formed the basis of the Gnostic doctrines, and to the language, at least, of which, the Apostles Paul and John conformed their expressions, in order to meet the previous apprehensions of their converts, and to disabuse them of what was false in this prevalent philosophy, and give it the true turn by applying these modes of expression to Christ and the doctrine of His Gospel.[1] But we might as well say Christianity was therefore founded in Platonism, as that, from its Hebraisms, it was therefore founded in Judaism.

[1] To say nothing of the rationalistic speculations on these points, they have been fully recognised and discussed in the most eminently orthodox sense by the late Dr Burton, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, in his elaborate *Bampton Lectures*, 1829.

Lateness of the Gospel epoch.

The late period of the promulgation of the Gospel to all nations, and especially the Apostle's declaration, "The times of this ignorance God hath winked at,"[1] have been made an objection against Christianity, as supposed at variance with the Divine perfections,—an objection which has led others to resort to a denial of the fact, by evangelising the Old Testament, or mixing up both in one, or asserting that Christianity is as old as the creation. Such is the confusion and misapprehension produced when men will not simply take the representations of these things as they are recorded, but attempt to test them by imaginary theories,—while, again, the New Testament clearly recognises the principle, that to the heathen some light was given, and that each should be judged according to the light they had.[2]

[1] Acts xvii. 30.

[2] Rom. ii. 6–9.

## § IX.—ON THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

THROUGHOUT the preceding discussion it has been all along *assumed* that the Bible generally is accepted as the authentic and correct record of the several religious systems on the nature and relations of which we have been commenting. This assumption is entirely distinct from any question as to the *absolute* claims of any part of those records to a superhuman and Divine character *in themselves*. It thus becomes desirable to add a few remarks on a subject though but *indirectly* referred to in the foregoing discussions, yet closely related to many parts of them, on which, at the present day, considerable difference of opinion exists, and on which it is important to prevent misconception,—the *inspiration of Scripture*.

Gift of the Spirit.

It is indeed manifest, on the face of the records both of the Old and New Testaments, that individuals are constantly spoken of as acting or speaking under the influence of *the Divine Spirit;* and in certain instances, in a more peculiar sense, not merely indi-

cative of general holiness or piety, but as implying a special gift or faculty imparted to them, whereby they were guided to a perception of Divine truth. It would be utterly superfluous to refer to such passages in detail: the assertion is repeatedly made with respect to prophets and other eminent men under the old dispensation, and still more emphatically in the New,—where not only are individual cases specially mentioned of such guidance and revelations to individual apostles and teachers,—but collectively we read of the solemn imparting to them of this heavenly gift by their Divine Master,[1] and the full outpouring of it on the day of Pentecost.[2]

But all this is distinct from the assertion of what is called the *inspiration of the* WRITINGS *of the Bible:* that is,—while all believers have agreed in assigning a general Divine character to the volumes of Scripture, a more particular view has prevailed with many, according to which a Divine authority is believed to attach to the very language and expressions employed by the sacred writers, and to extend to every part of their declarations alike, on all subjects.

Inspiration of writings.

[1] John xx. 22.

[2] Acts ii. 4.

Differences of opinion.

Now, apart from the speculations of those who discard revelation, even among Christian and Protestant divines of approved orthodoxy, great difference of opinion has prevailed as to the nature and extent of inspiration.

Inspiration of the Old Testament.

And we may here observe that that interpretation of the often quoted passage in the Second Epistle to Timothy, which would make it the proof of the *verbal inspiration of the writings* of the Old Testament, confessedly turns but on a single expression, and even on a single word—and that, too, of at least questionable translation,—θεόπνευστος,[1] which is rendered by some, more agreeably to its grammatical etymology, not "inspired," but "capable of being inspired," namely, by the enlightenment of Divine grace in the mind of the Christian reader.

But another translation (grammatically admissible) has been adopted by some, thus:—"Every writing inspired of God is also profitable for doctrine," &c. This, it has been observed, would make the *doctrine* the test of the *inspiration*, not the *inspiration* the test of the *doctrine*.[2]

[1] 2 Tim. iii 16.

[2] See *Letter and Spirit*, by Rev. T. Wilson, 1852, p. 14.

Meaning of inspiration.

The views entertained on this subject in former times were not, perhaps, very precisely defined. But a distinction has been generally allowed between the substantial disclosure of *Divine truths* to the minds of the apostles and prophets, and the guidance or dictation of their *particular forms of expression*,—between an inspiration of *thoughts* and one of *words*. The precise notion of a verbal and literal inspiration in the *writings*, though perhaps never strictly maintained among the more enlightened and learned class of divines, has acquired popularity with the illiterate, even to the extent of ascribing a kind of infallibility to the text,[1] and thus probably has been nominally upheld by many writers, who sought to accommodate themselves rather to the popular preconceptions than to reason. Hence among various parties in this country, this belief has long retained a considerable authority, which has only been slowly invaded by a few bolder critics in later times.[2]

Distinction between mental and verbal inspiration.

[1] This has been fully illustrated in Essay II.

[2] It may perhaps be necessary to remind some readers, that the *verbal inspiration* of the Bible, though popularly received, is a tenet nowhere affirmed in the authorised formularies of the Church of England.

Recent views opposed to older.

On the Continent, it is almost needless to observe, the state of opinion on this subject has long since advanced with the most unlimited freedom of criticism, and at present may only be in danger of a reaction. Of those who have evinced a more discriminating judgment on this point, among our own divines, we may cite an eminently instructive instance in Dr Arnold,[1] who observes, writing to Mr Justice Coleridge, "Have you seen your uncle's 'Letters on Inspiration,' which I believe are to be published? They are well fitted to break ground in the approaches to that momentous question, which involves in it so great a shock to existing notions—the greatest, probably, that has ever been given since the discovery of the falsehood of the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility. Yet it must come; and will end, in spite of the fears and clamours of the weak and bigoted, in the higher exalting, and more sure establishing of Christian truth."

The distinction maintained by the poet, alluded to, does not appear to differ materially from that just mentioned as adopted by many orthodox divines—a

[1] *Life*, i. 358.

distinction between "verbal inspiration," or literal *dictation* in what they *wrote*, as if they were mere passive instruments,—and "revelation," or communication of *Divine truths* to the *thoughts* of the apostles and prophets, while they were left to their own natural resources in the *modes* of *expression*, the forms of illustration or of argument, in defence or enforcement of the doctrine so communicated.[1]

Progress ideas on this subject.

That in this country Dr Arnold's anticipations have in some degree been since realised, no observant inquirer can fail to perceive from many indications afforded by the theological literature of the day. While, with a certain exclusive party, *verbal* and *literal* inspiration is still insisted on with strict pertinacity, and every one who does not admit it to the same extent invariably branded with the title of infidel or atheist,—there are yet numerous indications that, among the better informed and more liberally disposed of all parties, a more rational estimation of the case is fully admitted.

Discrepancies in Scripture.

It is now beginning to be acknowledged that a more

[1] Coleridge's views are most briefly given in his *Table Talk*, p. 163, ed. 1851. See also his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*.

critical examination of the Bible is to be allowed in those respects in which it must be just as open to criticism as every *professedly historical* book—such as matters of history, chronology, physical fact, as well as points of philology, and the like; and in those respects, in many instances, discrepancies, contradictions, and verbal inaccuracies are detected. The fact of the occurrence of such discrepancies can be denied only by those who wilfully shut their eyes to them. It may, indeed, be said that they occur only in points wholly immaterial; but even supposing this granted, it must be apparent to every one, that a book which contains inaccuracies, even on immaterial points, cannot be affirmed to possess an inherent character of infallibility on *all points*.

Opposing prejudices.

To prove such allegations by detailed examples is of course a very ungracious task, and cannot but expose any writer who undertakes it to obloquy and hostility.[1] The difficulty lies not in proving what is

[1] This task has been undertaken in a recent able and acute work—*The Doctrine of Inspiration*, &c., by the Rev. J. Macnaught, M.A., incumbent of St Chrysostom, Liverpool: London, 1856—which has excited a great sensation by the boldness and force with which the author combats the narrow popular view, and advocates a more enlightened interpretation. There may, perhaps, be little adduced in this work

indeed evident, but in inducing "the good, truth-fearing men" (as the author below referred to appropriately calls them) to see that the danger to religion lies just in the opposite direction—in continuing to insist on what is untenable, as if it were an essential part of the truth. This, indeed, is no more than all reasonable divines have seen and acknowledged; and several living prelates, and others of high authority in the English Church, have made admissions nearly

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which, *taken in itself*, had not long since been admitted by all thinking divines; and all that is advanced might have been intimated in other forms without exciting the hostility to which this author has been exposed. Yet when his readers get over the startling effect of the first announcement, that "there are errors in the Bible," and follow out the substantial claims of "*inspiration*," which the author examines and upholds according to the strictly scriptural sense of the term, as applied in many passages, and divested of the imagined adjunct of infallibility on every subject, they begin to find their alarms subside, their reason satisfied, and their faith in all the real substantial truths of revelation in no degree disparaged, but confirmed and purified.

But while I express my admiration for the uncompromising honesty of Mr Macnaught's declarations (peculiarly valuable as coming from a beneficed clergyman in an important position in the Church of England), and cannot but feel great satisfaction in knowing that, even amid the intense bigotry with which he is surrounded and assailed, his doctrines are well received by a numerous and increasing circle, I must yet record my dissent from some portions of his views, which appear to me to have a direct leaning to that kind of "biblical eclecticism" on which I have above commented (see Essay II. p. 75), and on which it is therefore needless to add further remark.

to this effect.[1] But too many are afraid to avow their convictions, to state them distinctly, or to follow them out to their legitimate consequences. Yet this is not the spirit in which it is possible, in the present times, to uphold religion; nor can such policy ever terminate in anything but in permanent disparagement and injury to the legitimate claims of Scripture, from an attempt to keep up an overstrained and false estimate of its application and authority,—a species of application never intended — a kind of authority to which it nowhere lays claim. Thus, while fanatical pretensions and extremes are justly discarded, the true and legitimate use and application of the Bible will be the more firmly upheld, especially when founded on the principles and guided by the views maintained in the preceding Essays.

[1] For such testimony see Mr Macnaught's work, p. 36, 2d ed.

## CONCLUSION.

To recapitulate and conclude: if what has been here advanced be allowed to be based, in any degree, in reason, fact, and truth, it will be acknowledged utterly inconsistent and at variance with the profession of Christianity to seek the principle and rule of religion anywhere else than in the disclosures of the Gospel, and least of all in an anomalous and neutralising admixture of its doctrines with those of older systems.

The view given us of the Divine dispensations in the Bible is, from first to last, that of *progressive adaptation* to the wants and capacities of different ages and nations:—a limited and restricted, imperfect and temporary dispensation to one people; the rest left to a more free but unaided condition of natural light; both neglecting, abusing, and corrupting the means they had: and, finally, a new and more perfect way of salvation laid open to both and to all in the Gospel.

Thus, to recur to the Old Testament is to go back

to a less advanced state of things—to retrograde, instead of "going on towards perfection."[1] If we follow a religion of nature, or of vague sentiment, we may, no doubt, take up the Bible, and select, at pleasure, such texts here or there as we may choose to wrest to our purpose. But this is a perversion of its obvious design.

If the express declarations of the New Testament are to be taken as the announcement of the pure doctrines of Christianity, its tenor is manifest:—"God spoke in times past, in sundry portions, and under different forms, to the fathers"—in His earlier dispensations; but "in these last days"—in this final dispensation—"unto us, by His Son."[2] It may be true that of old "God spake these words," but not, therefore, TO US. Our concern is not with what was of old, or at *first*, but with what has been revealed in these *last* days. The Old Testament is to us nothing, except as applied in the New; like the moon, in itself dark, it shines to us only by the reflected light of the Gospel. *Temporary* dispensations have passed away. With *national* and *local* dispensations, even if they

[1] Heb. vi. 1. [2] Heb. i. 1.

were not temporary, we have no concern. We Gentiles are "not under the Law," not because its obligation has been *abolished*, but because, to us, it *never existed*. The New Testament does not bring us under the Old. If we were not "under grace," we should only be under "nature," not under the Law. The Gospel, as addressed to the Gentiles, is essentially new and independent of any previous dispensations. Meats and days, ordinances and sabbaths, if primeval, have ceased—if Judaical, are national.

We may trace, in the ordinances of the Law, the types of the Gospel; in its shadows, the realities of Christianity. In this sense, it is very true that the Old Testament is not "contrary to the New."[1] But because they are not at variance, they are not, therefore, identical; they may be in *harmony*, but they are not in *unison*.

To attempt to introduce Old Testament observances into Christianity under the plea of utility and policy, is to disparage Divine authority. Expediency is not to be set up against truth; the sole rule of a consistent Christian in such matters, must be the Gospel, in its

[1] Art. vii.

full and final disclosure in the apostolic writings. To adopt any other rule, is to pretend to know more of the will of God than is revealed.

Christianity at once recognises an universal moral law, exalts and enlarges it, and sets it on a firmer basis. Distinctions of days have no connection with morality. The Sabbath is inseparable from the six days' creation, and with it ceases to be applicable. The whole tenor of the Old Law was a formal and positive service, with stated times and ordinances; that of the New is a perpetual consecration of daily life. The Law sanctified *rest;* the Gospel sanctified *work.* Under the Gospel dispensation no one day can be more holy than another: its service is a perpetual one, "in spirit and in truth;"[1] its worship, "prayer without ceasing."[2]

Christianity is not the religion of Moses, nor of Abraham, nor of Adam, but something far higher, more advanced, more spiritual. The old dispensations lowered heavenly things to human weakness; the new seeks to raise human weakness to heavenly things. To mix it with extraneous additions, even

[1] John iv. 23. [2] 1 Thes. v. 17.

from those older dispensations, is to pervert its very nature and object, which is to supersede and crown them all,—to impair its efficacy by engrafting on it an unevangelic formalism most alien from its spirit,—to lay it open to the attacks of the objector, and give the strongest handle to scepticism. And to instil such principles in education in these times, is but to lay the train for a fearful reaction. On the contrary, it ought to be the more peculiar endeavour of every sincere and enlightened advocate of the Gospel to vindicate its spiritual and rational character, and the purity and simplicity of its practical principles,—at once the source of its power, the ground of its stability and perpetuity, and the main plea of its internal evidence: and when intimately combined, as those practical principles must essentially be, with its sublime spiritual doctrines—received as matters, not of knowledge, but of faith, and in the comprehensive spirit of charity,—the perception and acknowledgment of Christian truth will increase with the progress of human enlightenment, till, "going on to perfection,"[1] it attain that promised condition,

[1] Heb. vi. 1.

when the "veil upon the hearts" of men, "in the reading of the Old Testament," "shall be taken away,"—and "all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."[1]

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 14-16.

# APPENDIX.

# APPENDIX.

## I.

The most remarkable of the early testimonies bearing on the present subject, is perhaps the Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew, in the middle of the second century, which clearly shows the extension of the corrupting Jewish element in the Church, and the view he entertained of it; though he himself did not go so far as those who refused to have fellowship with the Judaisers. "There are persons," he says, "who will have no intercourse with those who observe the ceremonial law; and will not share the hearth with them, and say they cannot be saved. I do not agree with these persons; but if the others, from weakness of persuasion, wish to observe, as far as they can, even those laws of Moses which we think were given on account of the hardness of man's heart, if they will only, at the same time, rest their hope on Christ, and do that which is lawful and holy by its own nature and by eternal laws, and have no hesitation in living with other Christians, without endeavouring to compel them also to the observance of these things, then we say that such persons are to be looked upon as our brethren in all respects. But if those from among your people (the

Jews) who say that they believe in Christ, compel those of the heathens, who embrace the faith in this same Christ, to live entirely according to the law laid down by Moses, or else decline all intercourse with them, then I cannot approve of *such persons* at all. And yet I believe that perhaps those who follow them in the observance of the ceremonial law, if they believe in Christ at the same time, will be saved."[1]

## II.

The following is the account referred to (note, p. 160), of an ancient Judaised Christianity which exists at this day, probably exactly as it was first planted in the fourth century:—"In the Highlands of Ethiopia, Major Harris found a so-called Christian kingdom, a national establishment dating from the earliest ages. By this Church saints and angels are invoked, the Virgin and St Michael are made scarcely subordinate deities, a crowded calendar of saints receive honours, and half the year is composed of fasts and festivals. It enjoins, also, confession to the priest, whose curse is dreaded by the people as the last calamity, while they confidently rely on the almsgiving and penances he imposes as an expiation of sin. Its most extraordinary peculiarities are certain usages and ceremonies, either borrowed from the Jews or retained from the old Ethiopic faith. Their

[1] *Dial.* p. 263. Ed. Paris, 1636. Also on many points illustrative of the subjects here discussed, the reader is referred to Bishop Kaye's account of Justin Martyr, 1836.

churches, which generally are small and mean, resemble precisely the Jewish temple; they are divided into three parts; the innermost is the holy of holies, and may be entered by the priest alone. The service is in a dead language, and dancing is one of the ceremonies. They keep in the same manner and with equal strictness the seventh day and the first—the Sabbath of the Jews, and the Lord's day of the Christians. They observe the Levitical prohibitions as to unclean animals; they wash their cups and platters as a religious duty; they will not eat or drink with pagan or Moslem; nor taste of flesh that has not been slain in the name of the Trinity. They practise circumcision; not asserting it to be obligatory, yet rigorously imposing it on every pagan convert to Christianity. They allow of concubinage. They are all baptized once every year, commemorating the baptism of Christ at the Epiphany by a religious procession to the river, into which men, women, and children enter in a promiscuous and shameless crowd. Fasts, of extraordinary frequency, are observed with unexampled strictness; two every week, on Wednesday and Friday: while, reckoning all the holy-days together, one entire half of the year is thus occupied.

"While the Ethiopic Church thus presents us with the singular spectacle of a barbarous and ferocious people retaining Jewish practices and the Christian name, in another quarter of the globe, in the mountains of Armenia, we find another Church—the Nestorian—almost identical in belief and usage; all, or nearly all, of the Levitical institutions being adopted. 'The Sabbath,' says Dr Grant, 'is regarded with a sacredness among the moun-

tain tribes which I have seen among no other Christians in the East. I have repeatedly been told by Nestorians of the plain, that their brethren in the mountains would immediately kill a man for travelling or labouring on the Sabbath; and there is abundant reason to believe that this was formerly done, though it has ceased since the people have become acquainted with the practice of Christendom on the subject.' While they do not hesitate thus to commit murder, they will by no means touch swine's flesh, and they are very careful to avoid ceremonial impurity."[1]

[It is, however, on Sunday that they keep their Sabbath; for although Dr Grant, in his second or third edition above quoted, speaks of "the Sabbath" merely, in his first he calls it "the Christian Sabbath" (p. 184), and in both editions applies to it the unambiguous title of "the Lord's-day." In both, moreover, he goes on to state that "the Nestorians have also the 'preparation before the Sabbath,' commencing about three hours before sunset *on Saturday*, when all labour should cease, except what is necessary to prepare for spending a quiet Sabbath: but the rule has in a measure fallen into disuse." In Badger's *Nestorians and their Rituals* (Lond. 1852), vol. i. p. 229, it is expressly said that "*Sunday* is observed with the greatest strictness by the Nestorians; none will work or travel on that day; it is generally spent by them in attending the services of the Church, in village conferences, and in rural amusements."—Ed.]

[1] From *The Oxford Protestant Magazine*, 1847.

## III.

The celebrated edict of Constantine has been differently interpreted. It certainly *contains* no reference to the Christian religion or its ordinances. It simply enjoins that "on the venerable day of the sun, the magistrates and citizens, and all business, shall be at rest (quiescant)." The labours of agriculture, however, may be continued, as the season may require. In the same year, also, he made a decree for the better regulation of the heathen sacrificial ceremonies. Also, to conciliate both Jews and Jewish Christians, he upheld and protected them in the observance of the Sabbath, for which he is much commended by Eusebius.[1]

The former edict relative to Sunday has been supposed to have been called for by the great and inconvenient increase of festivals among the Romans.[2]

## IV.

As indicative of the state of opinions among the great branches of the reformed Church, the celebrated Augsburg Confession stands pre-eminent. In reference to our present subject, it first makes some allusion to the controversies which had existed, bearing on the extent of the authority of the Church to change ordinances.

[1] *Vit. Const.* iv. 18.
[2] See *Time and Faith*, vol. ii. p. 570.

Afterwards, speaking of points ordained by the authority of the Church, this formulary proceeds :—

"Such cases are, the observance of the Lord's day, Easter, Pentecost, and other like festivals and rites. For those who judge that by the authority of the Church, instead of the Sabbath, the observance of the Lord's day was instituted as essential, are greatly in error.

"The Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath; which teaches that all the Mosaic ceremonies, after the revelation of the Gospel, may be omitted. And yet, since it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when to assemble together, it appears that the Church appointed for that end the Lord's day, which seems, on this ground, to have been the more acceptable, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observance neither of the Sabbath nor of any other day is necessary.

"There have been great disputes on the change of the law,—on the ceremonies of the new law,—on the change of the Sabbath; all which have arisen from the false persuasion that the worship of the Church ought to be similar to the Levitical."[1]

Notwithstanding the plainness with which all idea of Sabbatism is here repudiated, it yet cannot but be noticed, how much of the prevailing confusion of thought remains in the *reasons* and *grounds* assigned; that the Mosaic ceremonies "may be omitted," when the question

[1] *Confessio Augustana*, 1531, § vii.; *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 156. Ed. Oxford, 1827.

is, what should enforce them?—or how the Gentiles could have anything to do with them?—or could have any ground for imagining that Christian worship ought to resemble the Levitical. The real fundamental "false persuasion" which might have been referred to, is that of not seeing the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christianity. All that is here said, might well apply to Jewish converts.

The original form from which the above is cited, was that adhered to by the Lutherans. But in 1540, an altered version was made to suit the views of certain other parties. In this version the passage quoted remains the same, with the exception of the sentence beginning, "The Scripture has abrogated," &c., which here stands thus :—

"The Scripture allows that the observance of the Sabbath may now be a matter of liberty; for it teaches that the Mosaic ceremonies, after the revelation of the Gospel, are not necessary; and yet,"[1] &c.—an assertion, certainly, of the safest nature.

## V.

The Palatine, or Heidelberg Catechism (1563), after stating "the Decalogue" to be "the law of God," in answer to the question, "What does the fourth commandment enjoin?"—replies :—

"First, that the ministry of the Gospel and of the

[1] *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 230.

School should be preserved; that, as well as at other times, so particularly on festival days, I should studiously attend divine assemblies, — should diligently hear the word of God,—should partake of the Sacraments,—should add my prayers to the public prayers,— and, according to my ability, should contribute something for the poor.

"Lastly, that through all my life I should abstain from wicked actions; yielding to the Lord, that, by the Holy Spirit, he will do His work in me; and thus that I may, in this life, begin the eternal Sabbath."[1]

## VI.

The Racovian Catechism, after quoting the fourth commandment, puts the questions following:—

"*Q.* What think you of this precept?

"*A.* That it is taken away under the New Covenant, as well as other ceremonial observations.

"*Q.* Did not Christ institute that we should celebrate the day commonly called the Lord's Day, instead of a Sabbath?

"*A.* By no means: since the Christian religion, as it taketh away other ceremonial observations, so also the difference of days. (See Col. ii. 18.) But, forasmuch as we see the Lord's Day to be of old celebrated by Christians, we permit the same liberty to all Christians."[2]

It is here remarkable how, even in the freedom which

[1] *Sylloge Confessionum*, p. 388. [2] Ed. Amsterdam, 1652, p. 91.

this formulary asserts, there still lingers the fundamental misapprehension of dwelling on the *abolition* of an ordinance which, to the Gentile, never was in force, or of introducing the Decalogue at all.

## VII.

The French Protestant Catechism, while it regards the Decalogue in general as obligatory, yet makes the fourth commandment *peculiar*, and as not to be taken *literally;* and holds that the ceremonial part of it is abolished by the coming of Christ,—that it is typical of spiritual rest; yet that it has a reference to the observance of ecclesiastical ordinances, and the relief of servants from labour.[1]

A similar view is upheld at the present day by one of the most able French Protestant writers, Athanase Coquerel, who maintains that there is "no specific time —no consecrated day—assigned in the Gospel."[2]

## VIII.

On the other hand, the formal expression of that primary confusion of ideas which has so peculiarly beset the whole conception of the Divine Law in modern theology, may be fully traced in the Helvetian Confession, A.D. 1536.

[1] See *La Forme des Prières et le Catechisme, &c.*, annexed to the French New Testament. Ed. Leyden, 1687.

[2] *Christianity, &c.*, p. 380; transl. London, 1847.

It first (§ XII.) recognises the natural moral law written in the hearts of men, and then the Divine written law, in the two tables of Moses; and this is distinguished again into "the moral law, comprehended in the Decalogue," the ceremonial, and the judicial or political.

But "this law is not given to men that they may be justified by its observance; but that rather by its indications they may acknowledge their infirmity, their sin, their condemnation," and thus be led to faith in Christ. ". . . . Thus far the law is abrogated, that it no longer condemns us, or works wrath in us.

". . . . We know that the Scripture of the law is useful, if it be expounded by the Gospel: thus the reading of it is not to be abolished."[1]

It may be readily understood how this kind of dogmatising prepared the way for the deeper subtilties, and Judaical aberrations and enormities of the Westminster Assembly.

## IX.

Calvin states the case of the Sabbath as follows:—

"As the truth was delivered in types to the Jews, so it is made known to us without a figure:—1*st*, That during our whole lives it may be our aim to rest constantly from our own works, that the Lord may work in us by His Spirit. 2*nd*, That each one, as he has opportunity, may exercise himself diligently in private, in

[1] *Sylloge Confess.*, pp. 42, 43.

pious meditation on the works of God; and at the same time, that all may observe the lawful order appointed by the Church for hearing the word, ministration of the sacraments, and public prayer. *3rd*, That we may avoid oppressing those subject to us. In this way, we avoid the frivolities of false prophets (*nugæ pseudo-prophetarum*—in the French translation, *mensonges des faux docteurs*, 'lies of false teachers'), who in later times have instilled Jewish ideas into the people, asserting that nothing was abrogated, except what was ceremonial in the commandment . . . . while the moral part remains; that is, the observance of one day in seven. What else is this than to dishonour the Jews by changing the day, and yet, in our minds, to ascribe to it the same sanctity; thus retaining the same typical difference of days as was held among the Jews? And truly we see how they have profited by this doctrine. Those who thus adhere to the Jewish institution, go thrice as far as the Jews themselves in the gross and carnal superstition of Sabbatism; so that the rebukes which we read in Isaiah apply as much to those of the present day, as to those whom the prophet addressed."[1]

Beza, his follower, allowing that assemblies for worship on the Lord's day were of apostolic origin, adds, that there was yet no cessation of work required; for that would not be so much to abolish Judaism, as to put it off

[1] Calvin. *Institutions*, lib. ii. c. 8, § 34. [In a pamphlet of 92 pages, entitled *The Whole Doctrine of Calvin about the Sabbath and the Lord's Day* (Edinb. 1860), Mr R. Cox has collected from the voluminous writings of this Reformer all that they contain on the subject, and has appended extracts from Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Beza, Cranmer, and Knox.—Ed.]

and change it to another day. Again, speaking of Constantine's decree against work on the Lord's day, he mentions, as an *abuse* of his intentions, "that this degenerated at length into mere Judaism."[1]

## X.

Among the Lutherans, Chemnitz charged the Romanists with superstition, because they taught an inherent sanctity in the Lord's day and other festivals; and, while he would prohibit such labours as interfere with Divine service, yet he thinks it "a Jewish leaven" to prohibit such as do not so interfere.

[1] Bezæ *Nov. Test.*, note on Rev. i. 10. [The entire note may be seen in Mr Cox's publication just mentioned, p. 88, where the following additional extracts from Beza are given :—

"We pronounce it superstitious to believe that one day is more holy than another, and that resting from daily labours is in itself pleasing to God. Nevertheless we keep holy one day in seven, as the Lord has commanded—that is, we devote it entirely to the holding of assemblies and hearing the word of God, but without any Jewish ceremony or foolish superstition; on which account, also, we follow the custom of the ancient Church, in choosing for that purpose, not the Sabbath, but the Lord's Day."—*Confessio Christianæ Fidei*, per T. Bezam, cap. v. § 41. (Vezel. 1560.)

"This we may truly affirm, that ignorance of the difference between the Law and the Gospel has given occasion to the most and the greatest of the errors by which the Christian religion is at this day disturbed."—*Id.* cap. iv. § 23.

For ample discussions of the opinions of the Reformers concerning the Sabbath, see Dr Patrick Fairbairn's *Typology of Scripture*, vol. ii. pp. 130, 475 (3d. ed., Edinb. 1857), and Mr Cox's *Literature of the Sabbath Question*, vol. i. p. 382 (Edinb. 1865). Dr Fairbairn is on the Puritan side, while Mr Cox leans more to the Reformers. See also the *Bampton Lectures* of Dr Hessey, 1860, Lect. vi.—Ed.]

And of the same communion Bucer says, "To think that working on the Lord's day is in itself a sin, is a superstition, and a denying of the grace of Christ."

Again, the Confession of the Swiss Churches declares, "We do not conceive one day to be more holy than another, nor rest from work in itself pleasing to God."[1]

## XI.

Heylin and others have collected a number of testimonies of the early English Reformers and divines, which, though they differ considerably (as we might expect, from the then state of opinions) in respect to the extent to which they upheld the observance of the Lord's day, yet all agree in making an entire distinction between it and the Sabbath; which is the more remarkable when we perceive that fundamental confusion of idea which pervades the greater part of their views, in imagining some kind of abrogation of the one, or transference of the obligation to the other. Indeed, even the earlier declarations of the Continental Reformers are by no means wholly free from the same confusion. But we see it

[1] For these and many other similar testimonies see Heylin's *History of the Sabbath* (ed. 1636), ii. 180, *et seq.* For the last quotation he does not give any precise reference. It is manifestly not the same as the *Helvetian Confession* of 1536. [It is from *The Latter Confession of Helvetia*, drawn up by the ministers of Zurich in 1566. The original words are—"Neque enim alteram diem alterâ sanctiorem esse credimus, neque otium per se probari existimamus: sed et Dominicam, non Sabbatum, liberâ observatione celebramus" (cap. xxiv.) A translation of the whole chapter may be seen in Hall's *Harmony of Confessions*, p. 382: Lond. 1842.—Ed.]

more extensively brought out in the English theologians, from the obvious wish to conciliate the more powerful contentions which then prevailed in this country from the increasing spirit of Puritanism.

The strongest of all the testimonies cited—that of Tyndal—is not altogether devoid of this perplexity. "As for the Sabbath," he says, "we be lords over it, and may yet change it into Monday, or into any other day, as we see need; or we may make every tenth day holy-day only, if we see cause why. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday, save only to put a difference between us and the Jews. Neither need we any holy-day at all, if the people might be taught without it."[1]

## XII.

The "Necessary Erudition," drawn up by the leading bishops and divines of the Church of England, and put forth by authority of Henry VIII., thus expresses the case:—"As touching this (the fourth) commandment, there is a notable difference between this and the other nine. Thus, St Austin saith all the other nine be merely moral commandments, and belonged not only to the Jews, and all other people of the world in the time of the Old Testament, but also belong now to all Christian people in the New Testament. But this precept of the Sabbath, as concerning rest from bodily labour on the seventh day, is ceremonial, and pertained only to

[1] *Answer to Sir T. More*, p. 287.

the Jews in the Old Testament before the coming of Christ, and pertaineth not to us Christian people in the New Testament.

"Nevertheless, as concerning the spiritual rest which is figured and signified by this corporal rest,—that is to say, rest from the carnal works of the flesh, and all manner of sin,—this precept is moral, and remaineth still, and bindeth them that belong unto Christ; and not for every seventh day only, but for all days, hours, and times. For at all times we be bound to rest from fulfilling our own carnal will and pleasures, &c. . . . .

"Furthermore, besides this spiritual rest, which chiefly and principally is required of us, we be bound by this precept at certain times to cease from bodily labour, and to give our minds entirely and wholly unto God to hear the divine service, &c. . . . .

"Which things, although all Christian people be bound unto by this commandment, yet the Sabbath day, which is called the Saturday, is not now prescribed and appointed thereunto, as it was unto the Jews, but instead of the Sabbath day succeedeth Sunday, in the memory of Christ's resurrection, *and also many other* holy and festival days, which the Church hath ordained from time to time, which be called holy days, not because that one day is more acceptable to God than another, or of itself more holy than another, but because the Church hath ordained that upon those days we should give ourselves wholly without any impediment unto such holy works as be before expressed, &c. . . . . .

"Men must have a special regard that they be not over scrupulous or rather superstitious in abstaining

from bodily labour upon the holy day. For notwithstanding all that is afore spoken, it is not meant but we may upon the holy day give ourselves to labour for the speedy performance of the necessary affairs of the prince and the commonwealth, &c. . . . . and in other cases," &c.[1]

As to the *existing* formularies of the Church of England, what was observed before respecting the Catechism is sufficiently conclusive.

The only other passages which ever are or can be appealed to as in any way supposed declaratory of the opinion of the English Church on the point of Sabbatical observance are:—First, the Thirteenth Canon; which puts Sundays and all other holy-days on precisely the same level; refers to public religious duties and acts of charity, &c., but makes no reference whatever to any notion of consecration or desecration of the day, or to abstinence from any secular pursuits or amusements whatever; and secondly, a passage in the Homily "Of the time and place of prayer;" where, though some ideas of a Sabbatical tendency are inculcated, all express reference to the precise ground of such observance, and still more any assertion of the divine obligation, are studiously avoided. The Homilies generally notoriously exhibit a strong leaning to the puritanical side of the Reformation, and were, beyond question, designed to conciliate that section both of the clergy and laity. They were, no doubt, in this sense eminently "*necessary for the times*" in which

[1] *A Necessary Erudition for any Christian Man, &c.* 1543. Reprinted among *Formularies of Faith put forth by Authority during the Reign of Henry VIII.* Oxford, 1825. P. 306.

they were composed: which is all that is asserted of them in the declaration of conformity.

## XIII.

The forcible declarations against Sabbatism of Fryth, of Archbishop Crammer's Catechism (1548), of Bishop Hooper, and of Bishop Sanderson, as well as other eminent divines of the following age, still evince more or less of the same absence of clear fundamental ideas. Though entirely rejecting and repudiating the Jewish Sabbath, yet they mostly refer to an obligation of some kind, which they think has been transferred from one *day* to another. They, indeed, condemn the Judaical observance, but draw refined distinctions between the Law, as not binding Christians "by virtue of its delivery" (*ex vi præcepti*), but by reason and the like.[1]

Dr F. White, Bishop of Ely, expresses himself somewhat equivocally, thus:—"God's allowing six days of the week for a man's own work, concludeth not a necessity of keeping holy the first day of the week, rather than the sixth or the seventh: every day of the week and of the year is the Lord's, and the Sunday is no more the Lord's by the law of the fourth commandment than the Friday, for the Lord's day of that fourth commandment is the Saturday."[2]

Bishop Nicholson says, rather paradoxically, "They sin

[1] See Heylin, part ii. Archbishop Bramhall is perhaps more decided against Sabbatism. *Works*, fol. 1677. P. 912.

[2] *Treatise of the Sabbath Day.* 1635. P. 279.

against this (the fourth) commandment, who Judaise either in their opinions of the Sabbath, or their observance of it." [1]

Hooker, among festivals ordained by authority of the Church, includes the Lord's Day; so far maintaining a clear and consistent plea for its observance. He also urges distinctly the Apostle's censure of Jewish Sabbaths; but he then immediately resorts to the notion of the schoolmen, and speaks of "the Church" having "changed the Sabbath into the Lord's Day." [2]

Yet, afterwards referring to the idea of the Sabbath, he allows much latitude in the observance, on the plea of necessity and expediency.[3]

Bishop Jeremy Taylor [4] clearly discards all idea of a *succession* of the *one* institution in the *place* of the *other:* yet he conceives that this is *because* the Sabbath is *abrogated.*

But for the most complete specimens of learned quibbling, and halting or compromising between opposite opinions, the reader should look at the erudite discussion of the eminent and learned Bishop Andrewes, in his elaborate folio volume on the Ten Commandments (1642).

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[1] Quoted in Dr W. F. Hook's treatise on *The Lord's Day.* P. 83.
[2] *Ecc. Pol.* v. § 70. [3] *Ib.* § 71.
[4] *Ductor Dubitantium,* B. ii., ch. ii., rule 6, §§ 53-56.

## XIV.

The following extracts will exemplify views held by some university theologians in the early part of the 17th century, when the Puritanical doctrine was gaining much popularity.

In 1628, Dr Robinson, afterwards Archdeacon of Gloucester, maintained as his thesis in the Divinity disputation at Oxford, "That recreations on the Lord's day were not at all prohibited by the Word of God." So again, in 1634, the same thesis was defended by Mr Lockey, student of Christ Church. But far more remarkable was the "determination" given, *ex cathedrâ*, after the disputation at the University Act, 1622, by Dr Prideaux, then Regius Professor of Divinity,[1] of which the following is a summary :—

"1*st*. That the Sabbath was not instituted in the first Creation of the world, nor ever kept by any of the ancient patriarchs who lived before the law of Moses; therefore no moral and perpetual precept, as the others are.

"2*nd*. That the sanctifying of one day in seven is ceremonial only, and obliged the Jews; not moral, to oblige us Christians to the like observance.

"3*rd*. That the Lord's day is founded only on the authority of the Church, guided therein by the practice of the Apostles; not on the fourth commandment" (to assert which he elsewhere called "a scandalous doctrine"), "nor any other authority in Holy Scripture.

[1] Published in 1626 with his *Lectures*.

"4*th*. That the Church hath still authority to change the day; though such authority be not fit to be put in practice.

"5*th*. That, in the celebration of it, there is no such cessation from the works of labour required of us as was exacted of the Jews: but that we may lawfully dress meat, proportionable unto every man's estate, and do such things as be no hindrance to the public service appointed for the day.

"6*th*. That, on the Lord's day, all recreations whatsoever are to be allowed which honestly may refresh the spirits, and increase mutual love and neighbourhood amongst us; and that the names whereby the Jews did use to call their festivals, whereof the Sabbath was the chief, were borrowed from a Hebrew word which signifies to dance and to make merry, or rejoice. And, lastly, it appertains to the Christian magistrate to order and appoint what pastimes are to be permitted, and what prohibited,—not unto every private person, much less to every person's rash zeal, who, out of a schismatical stoicism (debarring men from their lawful pastimes), doth incline to Judaism."

## XV.

Isaac Barrow[1] entirely denies the primeval Sabbath; admits that the precise institution applied only to the Jews; yet, on general grounds of expediency and reason, contends for a practical obligation of nearly the same kind.

[1] Expos. of the Decal.; *Works*, v. 568. Ed. Oxford.

It will not be necessary to descend to later times, nor instructive to quote writers who, for the most part, either had formed no clear opinions on the subject, or did not dare to avow them.

But it may be remarked, that perhaps no single writer has done more towards keeping up the Sabbatical idea in the public mind, even while professedly opposing it, than Paley. The power, vigour, and clearness of his style have made him generally popular, and the moderation of his tone has recommended his views to multitudes who would turn away from more extreme religious declamation. After demolishing, one by one, the usual arguments from Scripture, and proving to demonstration that the Christian is under no Sabbatical obligation whatever, in a religious sense, he then goes round to the side of *expediency*, and upon its miserable principles, step by step, reinstates in their position all the conclusions in the sense of practical utility, which he had before subverted in a theological view. Thus his practical *conclusions* are eagerly embraced, and his authority quoted by those who do not like to avow the Sabbatism they really entertain.

It would be, of course, superfluous to refer to the writings of Archbishop Whately, or the less expanded, occasional remarks of Dr Arnold.

At the present day, from the incidental discussion which has arisen on certain practical points relative to the observance of Sunday, a considerable impulse has been given to the theological examination of the questions here treated; which, however, has been, for the most part, restricted to the special question of the Sab-

bath, or of the Lord's day. Among the numerous valuable works which have advocated the more liberal and Christian view, it may be right here briefly to refer the reader to the larger and more important work of Mr R. Cox, entitled *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties:* Edinb. 1853; to the equally elaborate work, *The Sabbath, &c.*, by Sir W. Domville, Bart., in two vols. (1855), the first volume of which appeared some years earlier, anonymously; as well as to a smaller pamphlet by the same author, in which he discusses a portion of the question.

To these may be added a work, or rather collection of a series of pamphlets, originally published separately, entitled *Ten Letters on the Sabbath Question*, by A. B. Clifford, 1856, in which the subject is discussed in an eminently forcible and popular manner, and supported by numerous quotations and authorities. A variety of smaller tracts, too numerous to specify, evince the zeal with which the subject is now taken up. I may name one,—*Facts and Fallacies on the Sabbath Question*, by H. Fulton. Dublin, 1856.

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## XVI.

One of the most remarkable and significant features of the case of Sabbatism at the present day is the fact (sufficiently natural, it being an *unchristian* idea) that it is upheld by some who reject Christianity.

Thus, in a recently published work of this school (the "Religious Thoughts and Memoranda of a Believer in Nature," London, 1855), the writer exults in the Sabbath

as valuable for the diffusion of his views (page 5), and asks, "Shall we ever hear those Sabbath bells call us to a higher and purer worship!" "Sunday my own day, the poor man's day" (page 15). "The Lord's day, the beautiful fiction upheld by the weak against the strong" (page 20), &c. &c.

And another advocate of the same view appears in the author of a recent deistical work on "Intuitive Morals," &c. (vol. ii. p. 161), where, after fully acknowledging the absence of New Testament authority, the Sabbath is expressly upheld as a matter of natural moral obligation.

To which it may be added, that one of the most celebrated deists of the seventeenth century, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, amid the many strange incoherencies of his system, expressly upheld the Sabbath as an obligation of natural religion.

It may be also observed, as eminently in point, that some of the same school maintain the doctrine of *temporal* retributions, and exactly on the same ground as the Judaical law did—because they do not teach any future state. The Old Testament, indeed (setting aside as they do the types and prophecies of Christ), becomes precisely a system of deism.

## XVII.

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO DR HEYLIN'S HISTORY OF THE SABBATH. LONDON, 1636.

The celebrated work of Dr Heylin is perhaps less known to the generality of readers than it deserves to be. Hence

a short extract from the very forcible remarks, which, in the somewhat quaint style of his time, he addresses to his reader at the commencement, may be usefully brought before many readers of the present work whose prepossessions may require similar conciliation.

"A PREFACE TO THEM WHO, BEING THEMSELVES MISTAKEN, HAVE MISGUIDED OTHERS IN THESE NEW DOCTRINES OF THE SABBATH.

"Not out of any humour or desire of being in action, or that I love to have my hands in any of those publike quarrels wherewith our peace hath beene disturbed; but that posteritie might not say we have beene wanting, for our parts, to your information, and the direction of *God's people* in the wayes of *truth;* have I adventured on this *Story.* A *Story* which shall represent unto you the *constant practice* of *God's Church* in the present business, from the *Creation* to these daies: that so you may the better see, how you are gone astray from the paths of truth, and tendries of *Antiquity*, and from the present judgment of all *men* and *Churches.* The *Arguments* whereto you trust, and upon seeming strength whereof you have beene hitherto emboldned to presse these *Sabbatarian doctrines* upon the consciences of poore people, I purpose not to meddle with in this *Discourse*, ἄλλης γὰρ σκεψέως οἰκειότερον. They have beene elsewhere thoroughly canvassed, and all those seeming strengths beate downe, by which you were yourselves misguided; and by the which you have since wrought on the affections of unlearned men, or such, at least, who judged not of them by their weight, but by their numbers. But where you give it out, as in *matter* of *fact*, how

that the *Sabbath* was ordained by *God* in *Paradise*, and kept accordingly by all the *patriarkes* before *Moses'* time; or otherwise ingraft by *nature* in the soule of man, and so in use also amongst the *Gentiles:* in that, I have adventured to let men see, that you are very much mistaken, and tell us things directly contrary unto *truth* of *Story*. Next, where it is the grounde-work of all your building, that the *Commandement* of the *Sabbath* is *morall*, *naturall*, and *perpetuall;* as punctually to be observed, as any other of the first or second table: I doubt not but it will appeare by this following *History*, that it was never so esteemed of by the Jewes themselves; no not when as the observation of the same was most severely pressed upon them by the *Law* and *Prophets*, nor when the day was made most burdensome unto them by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. Lastly, whereas you make the *Lord's day* to be an institution of our Savior Christ, confirmed by the continuall usage of the holy *Apostles*, and both by him and them imposed as a perpetuall ordinance on the *Christian Church;* making yourselves beleeve that so it was observed in the times before, as you have taught us to observe it in these latter dayes: I have made manifest to the world, that there is no such matter to be found at all, either in any Writings of the *Apostles*, or Monument of true *Antiquitie*, or in the practice of the middle or the present *Churches*. What said I, of the present Churches? So I said indeed; and doubt not, but it will appeare so in this following Storie: the present *Churches*, all of them, both *Greeke* and *Latine*, together with the *Protestants*, of what name soever, being farre different, both in their Doctrine and

their practice, from these new conceptions. And here I cannot chuse but note, That whereas those who first did set on foot these *Doctrines*, in all their other *practises* to subvert this *Church*, did beare themselves continually on the authoritie of *Calvin*, and the example of those *Churches* which came most neere unto the Plat-forme of *Geneva:* in these their *Sabbath speculations*, they had not onely none to follow; but they found *Calvin*, and *Geneva*, and those other Churches, directly contrarie unto them. However in all other matters they cryed up *Calvin* and his Writings, *making his Bookes the very canon, to which both Discipline and Doctrine* was to be conformed: yet, *hic magister non tenetur;* here, by his leave, they would forsake him, and leave him fairely to himselfe; that they themselves might also have the glory of a new invention. For you, my Brethren, and beloved in our *Lord* and *Saviour*, as I doe willingly beleeve that you have entertain'd these *Tenets* upon *mis-persuasion;* not out of any *ill intentions* to the *Church*, your *Mother;* and that it is an *errour* in your *judgements* onely, not of your *affections:* so, upon that beliefe, have I spared no paines, as much as in me is, to remove that *errour*, and rectifie what is amisse in your *opinion.* I hope you are not of those men, *Quos non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaderis*, who either hate to be *reformed*, or have so farre espoused a *quarrell*, that neither *truth* nor *reason* can divorce them from it. Nor would I gladly you should be of their resolutions, *Qui volunt id verum esse quod credunt, nolunt id credere quod verum est;* who are more apt to thinke all true which themselves beleeve, than be perswaded to beleeve such things as are true indeed.

. . . . . First, for the *Sabbath*, I shall shew you that it was not *instituted* by the *Lord* in *Paradise*, nor *naturally* imprinted in the *soule* of *man*, nor ever kept by any of the *ancient Fathers* before Moses' time: and this, not generally said, and no more but so, but proved particularly and successively in a continued descent of *times* and *men*. Next, that being given unto the *Jewes* by *Moses*, it was not so *observed* or reckoned of as any of the *Morall Precepts;* but sometimes kept, and sometimes not, according as men's private businesses, or the necessities of the State, might give way unto it; and finally, was for ever abrogated, with the other *ceremonies*, at the destruction of the *Temple*. As for the *Gentiles* all this while, it shall hereby appeare, that they took no more notice of it, (except a little, at the latter end of the *Jewish State*,) than to deride both it and all them that kept it. Then, for the *Lord's day*, that it was not *instituted* by our *Saviour Christ*, *commanded* by the *Apostles*, or *ordained* first by any other *Authoritie* than the *voluntarie consecration* of it by the *Church* to *Religious uses:* and being *consecrated* to those *uses* was not *advanced* to that *esteeme*, which it now enjoyes, but *leisurely* and by *degrees;* partly by the *Edicts* of secular *Princes;* partly by *Canons* of particular *Councels;* and finally by the *Decretals* of severall *Popes*, and *Orders* of superiour *Prelates:* and being so *advanced*, is *subject* still, as many Protestant *Doctors* say, to the *Authoritie* of the *Church*, to be *retained* or *changed*, as the *Church* thinks fit. Finally, that in all *ages* heretofore, and in all *Churches* at this present, it neither was nor is *esteemed* of as a *Sabbath-day*, nor reckned of so neere a kinne to

the former *Sabbath*, but that at all such leisure times, as were not destinate by the *Church* to *God's* publike *service*, men might apply their *minds*, and bestow their *thoughts*, either about their *businesses*, or upon their *pleasures*, such as are *lawfull* in *themselves*, and not *prohibited* by those *Powers* under which they lived. . . . . Nor would I you should thinke it any blemish to your reputation, should you desert a cause which with so vehement affections you have erst maintained: or that the world would censure you of too deepe a folly, should you *retract* what you have either taught or written in the times before. Rather the world and all good men shall praise both your *integrity* and *ingenuity*, in that you thinke it no disparagement to yeeld the better unto *truth*, whensoever you find it. Being men, conceive it not impossible but that you may be in *errour;* and having *erred*, thinke it your greatest *victory* that you are conquered by the *truth:* which being mighty will *prevaile*, and either here or elsewhere enforce all of us to confesse the great powers thereof."

## XVIII.

### ON MR HUGH MILLER'S "TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS."

In the preceding Essays, especially in the second, at the risk of being thought to recur needlessly to a topic long since exhausted, I have once more repeated a statement of what I believe to be the only sound and rational view of the relations of the Bible to geology, viz., *that they have no relation at all.* Having, twenty years ago (in

my work on "The Connection of Natural and Divine Truth," 1838), pointed out in detail the radical fault of *all Bible-geology whatsoever*, in the fundamental misconception of seeking *philosophy in revelation*,—or imagining that Hebrew prophets or Christian apostles should be expected to declare, or recognise in any way, or conform to, the truths of modern inductive science,—it is a work of supererogation, which I decline undertaking, to refute over again those perversions alike of science and of Scripture which are still from time to time revived.

In my former Essays I had adverted to some of the Biblico-geological theories of the late Mr Hugh Miller; whose posthumous work on the same subject has obtained celebrity with a considerable class of readers. But especially in consideration of the melancholy circumstances attending his recent death, I had resolved to abstain from any remarks on the contents of that book. A few general observations before made[1] would, I conceived, bear a sufficient application to the tenor of all such arguments, and render more particular allusions needless. But, from representations made since from several quarters, I feel it incumbent on me, however reluctantly, to add a few very brief observations on the tenor of his work alluded to, "The Testimony of the Rocks," Edinburgh, 1857.

The author was, doubtless, in many respects a remarkable, but greatly overrated, man. Having raised himself from a humble station by the unaided force of a naturally strong and inquiring mind, he, with untiring energy,

[1] Essay II. pp. 12, 55–65.

worked out the details of geology, and even extended its boundaries by original researches. But the deep-rooted early prepossessions of a dark and narrow Judaical theology fettered all philosophical ideas, and led him to a corresponding narrow estimate of the higher bearings of his science.

The purely geological portion of the work is characterised by the well-known acuteness, accuracy, and descriptive talent of the author. He is here in his proper province; the illustrations, both verbal and pictorial, are excellent. But there is a melancholy contrast in those portions, little connected with the former, which bear on theological views.

Both the author, it must be fully admitted, and his predecessor in the same field, Dr Pye Smith, have been useful *pioneers* amid popular prejudice. They were both in positions which, though of a different kind, enabled them to command a hearing from a numerous class whose prepossessions would have prevented their listening to more purely philosophical expositions. Guarding their statements by scriptural interpretations, however puerile, they at length enabled even the religious dogmatists to admit that the world was not formed in the momentary manner, or at the recent period, vulgarly believed, nor even in six literal days. But then those "days" were to be explained; and among the various interpretations proposed, the author speaks with approbation of the hypothesis of Kurtz[1] (borrowed without acknowledgment by the author of *The Genesis of the Earth and Man*), to the

[1] Page 160.

effect that Moses was favoured with a series of visions representing the stages of Creation in a kind of "drama:" while yet the author bestows unmeasured censure on those who regard the narrative as a myth or parable![1] But his own views are but little less fanciful. After having abandoned the various visionary systems of catastrophes and creations, the author returns to the idea of *immensely long periods;* and, following the division adopted by geologists, of palæozoic, secondary, and tertiary formations (between which, after all, there is no *real, physical discontinuity*[2]), by a wild effort of imagination he conceives these periods as intended to be described in the Mosaic "days" as the epochs of plants, reptiles, and mammals!—when, nevertheless, in the *earliest* of these deposits which have remained unfused, *animal* life abounded!

From such very transparent disguises, it is but one step to the naked avowal of the truth,—if, indeed, they are really anything more than a tacit confession of it,—that *nothing in geology bears the smallest resemblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony*, torture the interpretation to whatever extent we may.

On the other parts of the author's remarks it is needless to dwell in detail. He refers to my writings;[3] but, in reference to Natural Theology, a little more examination of them might, possibly, have helped to better views of the great argument of universal order which he, with some confusion of thought, disparages[4] as being upheld by some "as itself a final cause!"

[1] Page 381.
[2] See *Unity of Worlds,* Essay III. § 1 p. 361, 2d edition.
[3] Page 380.
[4] Page 207.

He devotes (p. 267) upwards of eighty pages to the attempt to prove that, by the magnificent imagery of a miraculous universal deluge, Moses really meant to describe a petty natural local inundation in some part of Central Asia. At the same time, he expatiates on the large collection which he exhibits of early traditions, or myths of all nations, descriptive of a deluge,—which some speculators regard as rather suggestive of the derivation of the Mosaic narrative from a common origin; while to the *existing popular belief* an inspired teacher might give a religious turn and application, as in the case of the cosmogony, and, indeed, of all or any previously existing ideas on physical and extraneous subjects.

Without dwelling on these or the like arguments, it will suffice here to add, that on the whole, in these speculations of Mr H. Miller, the very last possible resources of Biblical interpretation must be regarded as thoroughly exhausted. They are the very ghost of defunct Biblical geology: and even those who cannot perceive the essential and inherent irrationality of all idea of mixing up the deductions of science with the language of Scripture, must now admit that all such attempts *have* practically failed; and they must henceforth be content to allow geology uninterruptedly to extend the domain of natural order, through the infinity of past time, while they may learn that the cosmogony of the Mosaic law, with that dispensation of which it is a part, has passed away and been superseded: the one, by an inductive philosophy; the other, by a spiritual religion.

1857.

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